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# CAESURA

FALL 1965

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UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

Cover design: *Nude* by William Ramage

Photography (13, 14, 31, 32, 33) by Fred Pilon

“Piping in Summer” by Roland Laramee (p. 49) was originally a selection for the Commencement 1965 issue.

# CÆSURA

The Literary Magazine  
Of The University Of Massachusetts

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CÆSURA is published three times a year by undergraduates of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Massachusetts and is edited by undergraduate and graduate students.

Subscription for the year is one dollar and fifty cents. Address: Box 104, Recognized Student Organizations, Student Union, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts.

VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER ONE

## AN EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The role of student publications in an expanding university has been the subject of much discussion. While *Cæsura* acknowledges the necessity for the student press to keep pace with the growing complexity of education, we feel that the responsibility of instituting changes in campus publications rests with the publications themselves, rather than with faculty or administration-instituted publishing boards as have recently been suggested here.

It is with this responsibility in mind, and with the knowledge that *Cæsura* exists as a means of increasing student familiarity with the mechanics of publication as well as a medium for artistic expression, that we have instituted a much-needed reorganization of our staff. While maintaining the small editorial staff necessary for the selection of manuscripts, the constitution under which *Cæsura* will now publish provides for staff membership for all students interested in working on the magazine.

Hopefully, other student publications will also take steps to adapt themselves to inevitable expansion. It is clear that neglect of this responsibility can lead only to atrophy of the student press. It is also our hope that the administrative and departmental resources of the University will be directed toward advising the publications in their growth. Only through such co-operation can we gain and maintain our goal of a strong, efficient, and independent press.

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# CONCIERTO DE ARANJUEZ

Jack Eliot Myers

—*for Miles Davis*

Ah Bandito, this cracked flatland  
is not the death you dreamed of.  
You'd rather bathe your thudding body  
in the arena where the raggle bulk  
bull's blood roars, thrilling the throng,  
tumbling El Toro with a pass  
of your cartwheeling cape.

You've traded your sword  
for a bullet-strapped chest  
and it weighs heavy for the heart  
you once had  
for the love that grew  
stunted in wild darkness.

Bandito, now the purple cordilleras  
call you to hide crouched in waiting  
in the moonlight snapped white grass  
to chisel off a cough  
in the dust of ox-eyed time.

Long ago you raced across rocky creeks  
and chased the flashing señoritas  
among the tumbling fields and hills.

Now the desert guzzles down your days  
the women left are weeping  
lizards couch on cactus  
and you die the lonely death.

Ah Bandito! You have come to this  
day laughing and spitting:  
a sun-dried clown troubled  
by dreams asleep in a cannon.

## CÆSURA

On the horizon a thin trumpet crawls,  
ripples across the desert and scribbles out your name.  
Here gallops the gods with death on their tongues  
astride hot legged steel strapped steeds  
lording your hour of bullets and drums  
in the land of your lawless breed.

Can you hear the legion snaps  
of a thousand cracking backs  
posting on stiff great horses  
bobbing up and down  
looking for your dusty half  
hidden carrion corpse?

! Arriba, Bandito, arriba! Mire su muerte llegando!

Bandito, the soldiers will find you on the mountain

— wordless and staring —

under the thunder sinking sun  
that drags your long dead shadow  
into a plunging sword

or horn.

# CONCIERTO DE OUTLAWE

John Milmore

Ah bandoto ah bandiot ah, bleak Myers —  
    did your beard point east that night?  
(Ethel harbored dreams of biting off your nose)  
    I have seen her tongue — her kisses  
        tasty as a crushed foetus,  
salted and baked, placed before you, adorned by a rose)

Bandiot,  
You are best-off kneeling on those shore cliffs  
At Nahant, praying to the waters, the far sprayed bankments.  
And mark! The drum-bouncing tides of Rimbaud!  
— The crazed high drum-bounce through an hour of rain, —  
*The moon-scales a-glow on the sea*

Ah scraggle eye — does your beard point seaward at dusk?  
You got a book with black pages in your hand;

Now, the drummers on tree-drums begin, the wood drums  
Brough near to the sea — from the north, near  
The cliff-edge file young Deva women, sex-  
Angels in a dancing of white to a cartwheeling boom

Their drum-bouncing arses glow clad in gold cloth!  
*It's a carnival for hire cast across a drunken tide*  
*You got her by the belly buddy ride buddy ride*

. . . . . the crazed weaved drum bounce through an hour of rain,  
The moon scales gone cool on the sea, — as telling  
As the lanterns of the sun —  
Those muffled echoes from the drum, those blistered echoes  
Are your own in weary run;

Then fuse the face and pain —  
The drumbeat doesn't change but as  
It speeds itself recalls a dream,

And you, your voice like strangled bells,  
Mix colored powder, absinthe and dry ice and swing  
The turquoise, gold, an dscarlet chunks on ropes,  
Endorsing cliff-edge stone with brittle toes

And swing the rope around, around around and  
With a mirror analogue  
The chant drifts in a rainbow fog.

But I can hear the cloudbank cackle even now —  
The rain is arrested there high in the wind  
With the song of the real joke and how the joke ends;  
One got sins to his credit one got  
Running through the night beneath  
The slim fugue of the white crow  
And the litanies of flight.

## UNTITLED

Judy Vannett

Young, naïve, alone  
In a world of polished glass  
She snagged her soul,  
And watched her mind run.

## ART NOTES

During the decade of the 1950's the University's proximity to New York City provided sufficient opportunity for interested patrons to observe the most important developments in the arts through direct experience. It would be incorrect to say that New York has lost its seat as the cultural center of our country, but it is no longer possible to assert that the overwhelming percentage of important activity in the arts is centered in and around New York City. The decline of The New York School of Action Painting left the art world without a dominant new school to take its place, but rather with an atmosphere charged with vitality and experimentation. New York responded with "Pop Art", then "Op Art", "New Humanism" arose in Mexico, "Space Painting" on the West Coast, and scores of artists throughout the country expressed ideas reflecting developments in their personal "art cultures". Important artists have accepted teaching positions in many American colleges and universities, creating campus art centers.

In June of 1965 The University of Massachusetts conferred its first Master of Fine Arts Degree in painting. With this modest beginning the University Art Department launched a graduate program in art which has in the short span of a year been expanded to offer master's degrees in sculpture, ceramics, and printmaking, as well as painting. The development of a graduate program in art has several important implications for the university.

## CÆSURA

The graduate art program at The University of Massachusetts has brought to our campus students from across the country and across the world. They bring with them ideas, attitudes and art, for which we are grateful.

The art in this issue consists of selected works by those graduate art students who started their degree program in the 1965-1966 academic year.

Work juried by:

James Hendricks . . Art Faculty, University of Massachusetts

Dennis Byng . . . . . Art Faculty, Smith College

Edward Hill . . . . . Art Faculty, Smith College

Robert Pero . . . . . Art Editor, *Cæsure*









# THE AERIE

## Burgess Needle

There were no ants. All the crumbs had been whisked away and the crisply black Formicidae had vanished. I like insects, but ants are my favorites. They are so easy to deceive. Sometimes, after I change from thought to substance, I amuse myself with them. You can lead them into traps of fly-paper or poisoned honey jars and then stare at them as they march in stoic procession to their doom. They are easily disposed of with chemicals or simply flattened into nothingness by the most hesitant of steps. So the ants were gone. What did it mean?

The coffee stains had also disappeared and the low mahogany-topped table had acquired an unmistakable sheen. How unusual! Everywhere I looked there was neatness and order. I watched Ellen clean the fireplace and sweep up the loose ashes into a dust pan. She drifted outside and softly deposited the chalky black mass into the brook. I saw them fall, slowly floating down the bank, until one by one they tainted the water briefly with their ebony patterns, never once, I thought, polluting its essence. In her return, Ellen shimmered, gracefully settled to earth and re-entered her body. I examined the downstairs area. There were no errant dishes in the kitchen and the sink yawned enamel white to the world, showing anyone who cared to peer into its sterile depths that it was clean clean clean. Obscene cleanliness haunted every corner. The rug in the dining room had been flattened out. Where were the wrinkles hiding? Hoping to see at least a wisp of cobweb, I glanced into the cupboard. One stray thumb tack, the only blot on the scrubbed interior, stabbed the aid defiantly. Then I remembered. Today was the visitation!

The bus was either already at the station or rapidly approaching. My name is Barnum. Homer, my friend, was on the bus, and it was time to pick him up.

I had not seen Homer for about ten months, ever since I ran

away with May, and I gathered by his letters that he was anxious to meet my new family. When I left with May just before Christmas it was a great shock to everyone except Sloan, my brother. He'd once caught a forty-three pound snapping turtle in the Charles River while fishing for eels and the subsequent trauma had instilled in him an unshatterable veneer of dynamic apathy. Anyway, May had 'attended' Miss Whitney's Finishing School and I had 'studied' at State, so everyone figured the romance would fade pretty quickly. Even when mother walked into my attic room and found May and myself enjoying a bit of spontaneous sex she only shook her head in mute disapproval.

"May's been to Miss Whitney's and Barnum's only been to State," she confided to my father. "It will never last."

You realize now that I had to do something serious in order to prove to them the depth of our relationship. May had suggested her mother's place and I had hastily accepted.

Goblins with sceptres and men's Gods with clay  
Danced in a circle and brought me to May —  
Cheetah bit me when we met  
Jumping from the hole he lived in  
Off with his head! Off with his head!  
And that's exactly what we did . . . in a way.

May told me she hadn't been home in a long time. When we arrived, Ellen, her mother, seemed eager to have her back even if it meant adopting a semi-son-in-law in the bargain. I rather considered myself to be a fringe benefit. Later, I wrote to Homer about the beautiful house and the scenery of blue mountains in the distance with the fir-tree forest all around. Unforgivably, I never mentioned Cheetah in my correspondence. In retrospect, I cannot imagine how he slipped my mind. Cheetah was our protector and he always gave us a warning scrape across our minds if any outsiders headed in our direction. He kept us . . . alone.

Magnificently, we wasted time, breaking our reverie occasionally to write poems in the round and try to think of ways to stop Winkle from dumping garbage in front of the forest. Winkle was evil personified. Ellen, who would qualify even a statement about the weather, would have no qualifications on that score. He drank cans of warm beer and killed cattle on his farm for food and local sale. On the edge of the forest there was always a large mound of beer cans mixed among cows' heads and bags of wormy intestines.

Our drinking water came from the stream that ran through the woods, and May worried about maggots from the stream poisoning our corporeal forms.

Once, when I was in body form, I hid in Winkle's barn and witnessed the slaughtering of a bull. It was wonderful!

You can see the towers of ivory  
And spit from the parapets of gold  
But there's nothing to match the word 'gory'  
And a carcass that you yourself made cold.

Hee-hee-hee, I'm just loaded with them . . . just loaded with them . . . well, anyway, he led the brute inside by a nose ring and, as it stood docile and silent, he smashed in its skull with a sledge hammer. I can still feel the jar my heart made as I vicariously felt the metal splinter the bone structure. Breathing heavily and feeling a fire that burned down to my crotch, I clutched a hand rail and shivered as the bull's eyes popped out in horrific dismay. It looked up in a last gesture of supplication and then its vast body sank to its knees and finally onto its side. Winkle must have sensed another's presence because he left the body momentarily to look behind a bale of hay. I really wanted to stay for the dismembering, but I was afraid he would find me. All in all, the rules are quite explicit and I had no possible excuse for being on Winkle's territory. We did have our privileges, but upstaging another's role was considered a heinous crime.

May has two younger sisters: Pauline, the artiste, paints eerie portraits of butterfly maidens and gooseboys who all look vaguely like Pauline; and Model Child, an elfin version of May, who is terribly spoiled. After a few weeks I blended into the family patterns and Ellen stopped screaming when I suddenly came upon her in the bathroom or bathing, demurely nude, in the brook. Ellen's husband had disappeared so long before that all the locks were rusted immobile. Since Model Child constantly wandered around the house, peeking into corners and creaking rooms, I broke a thumbnail and replaced my customary candor with discretion by fixing the lock on the bedroom door.

Fibber McGee and sweet Molly Malone  
I'm a better actor than Franchot Tone

Yeah, man . . . I know I know, but they just pop into my head.

I wrote descriptions of my new family to Homer and his interest was immediately aroused. Homer plans to become a psychiatrist

and he can usually be found in the middle of a party scribbling 'dialogue' of casually observing social 'camp-type' people in action. He's very much up on the latest fads, dontcha know. My explanations were brief and to the point, concerning my new surroundings and neighbors, but he cast them all aside as unprofessional and wrote me he would be up as soon as his school year was over.

Thorndike, Watson, Pavlov and Skinner

Behavior, behavior and no one the winner.

Oops, there I go again.

Anyway, the house was clean and it was time to pick him up. Ellen's Model-T had never been completely emptied of mildewed magazines and engrained beach blankets so we were fairly crowded before Homer entered. On the way back, because Model said it was stuffy and because Ellen complained about the 'fumes', we froze by opened windows. There was not much conversation on the way back, partly due to Homer's indifference and partly due to the cold. My nose started running and it almost got away before I . . . no no no . . . my nose started running but I could only sniff (there!). My hands were wrapped around Model Child to keep her from falling out of the car — in case the door suddenly sprung opened. Ellen worried about things like that. By the time we reached the house my upper lip was joined to my nose by a sheen of glazed spittle.

It was night and snow was falling and roaring around us. After stumbling into the chilled living room and shedding our coats, we sat stiffly by the fire.

I could tell by the way he was fidgetting that Homer had to go to the bathroom, but he was too timid to say anything. His inaction piqued me. Cheetah was uneasy and his random thought patterns, sent out as electric impulses, jabbed us alert. Model was the first to break, and sensing that Homer had to use the 'facilities' (a euphemism she would no doubt despise), stared at him as he shook in his seat.

"Supper's ready, Homer," Ellen said. "If you'd like to wash up the bathroom is over there by the stairway."

He leaped from the chair he was twitching in and Model unloosed her trap.

"Think quiet in the bathroom, Homer," she said.

He stopped dead and started to fidget again.

"Think quiet?" he asked.

Model smiled to herself, and goaded by Cheetah, said, "You'll



get scrapped inside. There's so much water in the bathroom that you'd better think quite softly . . . if you know what I mean."

"Ah well," he quipped . . . water water everywhere and not a drop to drink."

She smirked in replying, "Plug up my cloaca and vomit in the sink."

Horrid silence, then . . . "What did she say?"

"I said . . ."

"Never mind . . . forgot all about the water . . . stupid of me . . . I'll think of nothing but feathers and goose-down (this with an analyst's condescension). Will that be all right?"

Model nodded glumly. I personally did not expect anything to happen, but I motioned the others to keep quiet just in case. After an agonizing moment he re-entered the room.

"Pauly," he said, "Barnum's told me so much about your paintings. May I see some of your portraits?"

She stared at me icily for an instant and then wrinkled her nose.

"No, I'm afraid not," she replied. "My later work has apparently been very well received as 'scop' creations and I'm pulling in about a C note a canvas. Last one went out yesterday."

"Why that's very . . . ah, very nice, yes, very nice indeed. What exactly is meant by the term 'Scop art'?"

"Some cooly named it after a drug called Scopolamine. The chemical description is  $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$ . It produces a kind of twilight sleep. Somewhat similar to the effect my paintings have on senile dowagers. They seem to appreciate art that isn't demanding to the senses . . . anyway, it's all gone . . . yup, not a strip left. . . ."

"You must have made quite a pile of money so far."

"Yes, I have, but I've spent most of it on electrical supplies. Would you like to see some that work? I'm experimenting with explosives and electrical therapy . . . yes, therapy . . . hee-hee-hee. Would you like to see my two-in-one time bomb?"

Home looked at me, hesitating before speaking. I maintained a neutral expression. Secretly I really wished he'd open up a bit.

"A time bomb? Oh yes, love to see it. Careful, now . . ."

She glared at him until the smile left his face. I signalled for her to leave. Seconds later I could sense her flitting among the rafters in the attic to her hidden cache of goodies.

"I hope she doesn't disturb Cheetah," Model said briefly.

"Cheetah?" Homer asked.

"Yes, Cheetah! He's the one who stays up in the attic. If you don't think quiet he gets mad. It's pretty safe now because he needs an awful lot of water to become and since the pipes are mostly frozen it's hard to tell exactly how powerful he is."

"Become what?" he asked.

"Nothing . . . just become," she said.

"I see. And how long has he been up there?"

Ever since poor daddy dear

Thinking he had naught to fear

Drew some white marks on the floor . . .

Dark cloud come — he not there no more.

"A cloud . . .?"

"The pentagon was imperfectly drawn," I told him.

He looked at me closely and I winked.

"Aha . . . I see. So that's what became of your daddy."

"Yes, he's been gone a long time now . . . want to write a round?"

"A round . . .? . . . well, I hardly ever . . . er . . . a round of what?"

"Poems in the round! You know . . . everybody contributes a word and you all sit in a circle and then try to make a poem out of all the words that are handed in . . . got that?"

"What sort of words are handed in to use?"

"Fun stuff . . . like . . . corpse . . . dropsy . . . plague . . . pox . . . you know, stuff like that."

"Maybe later in the evening we can . . . ah, here's Pauly."

Pauly appeared, clutching a wooden box under her arm.

"I just knew the minute I left you'd start talking about something else."

"Only until you returned." He gave his usual inane smile.  
"Now, what do we have here?"

She was absolutely gloating with enthusiasm. Placing the box on the floor, she flipped open the lid. Inside was a mass of wiring and an old alarm clock set next to a blasting cap.

"See . . . I set the alarm and that causes this lever here to come down and rotate against this cog and at the exact second . . . ZAP!"

"How enthralling!"

"You see, if I don't want it to be a time bomb, I can take these two copper wires here and attach them to a metal plate. Most of the time I fool around with insects. It's great! You ought to see

them hop when that juice hits their sciatic nerve. Someday Mommy promised me I could use house power and . . . well, I don't have to tell you what alternating current will do to those insects. Actually (she leaned toward Homer) I'd like to try it on something bigger. Can you just imagine . . ."

"That's enough, Pauly," Ellen interrupted. "I'm sure that Homer is tired after his long trip. I'll show him his room. We finished renovating the attic only last year and Cheetah hasn't had any company for a long, long time."

"Cheetah! You mean he really exists?"

"Cheetah's the dog. His room, or rather his blanket, is in the attic. What on earth have the children been telling you?"

"Just a family joke . . . nothing important."

Beelzebub on earth, frosty mist on Venus

Curious jokes, with mayhem between us.

(Or to be campy . . . petrified penis)

In the morning he was gone!

"What do you think, Barnum?" May asked. "Maybe he left for town."

"Town's six miles away through open fields and scrub land. It's a good eight miles if he follows the highway. We didn't frighten him that much."

"Quiet! Here he comes."

"Hey, Homer," I said. "Where you been?"

"It's been so long since I've seen the countryside I thought I'd take a stroll through the fir-tree forest. God! I found this mound of beer cans and rotting cows' heads just this side of the brook. The most extraordinary character was placing another cow's head by the water. He reminded me of an old illustration I once saw of Huck Finn's father. He had a beer can sticking out of his back pocket. It's rather early to be drinking beer, isn't it?"

"It's Winkle!" said Model, jumping up and down. "He's seen Winkle. Isn't he mean looking, Homer? He's always trying to pollute our drinking water with maggots from the cows' heads."

"Really? Can't you do anything about it? What about the Board of Health man for this area?"

'Cause Winkle's the head of every department

Sticks his cash in the right compartment

Health and welfare, social and apart

He's a man to contend with — an old fossilized fart.

May and Ellen jumped up and down.

"Say, that was a good one," Ellen said. "Like that, Homer? She's one of the best there is for fast ones . . . yup!"

Model had turned her attention to Pauly, who was off in a corner scratching herself fitfully.

"Pauly!" she squealed. "What's that all over your arm? It looks like ringworm. Ich! Pauly's got ringworm!"

"What a dreadful thing to say," Homer interrupted her tirade. "You probably wouldn't know a case of ringworm if it was staring you in the face."

Model started to cry.

"I have not got ringworm on my arm!"

"You know, it may very well be true," Ellen said. "We know for a fact that Winkle's got it himself and it's all too possible that it could have spread. The miracle is that we haven't caught anything from the water. I do my best, you know, but it's so difficult to cope with all that Cesium in the atmosphere that . . ."

"The what?"

"Never mind. It's not important. You're here for a vacation and here we are discussing fallout. Would you like to see our library?"

"Yes, very much . . . in this house?"

She smiled warmly at him and shook her head. We then led him to the smaller house across the street. Each of us slipped at least once on the contoured snow that followed the road's edge. Inside were walls of criticism, poetry, and plays . . . many, many plays. Most of the time we read plays. Even Model was well versed on the American stage and within a few years we would introduce her to the foreign contributions (sounds snotty, but that's the way we operate). Her reaction to Pirandello would be amusing. Homer had a chance to quickly peruse a few shelves before we hustled him back outside. It was bitterly cold in the small house and our poor bodies needed warmth something terrible.

"The mail! I forgot about the mail"! Model shrieked and ran down the slope toward the mail box which jutted out of a snowbank.

"The male what?" Homer asked, in his usual fog.

The red flag was up, clearly visible against a white background. Model was about halfway to it when a roaring sound rent the air and a plow sped around a corner and whooshed past the house. A mountain of snow cascaded every which way down the road. Plucked



from its moorings, the mail box was carried several hundred yards down the line only to smash against a tree.

"What was that? It looked as if that was Winkle driving. Is he the postman too?" Homer asked.

"No," May said. "That was Luke Conduit, the Road Commissioner. He's also one of the town selectmen and a good friend of Winkle's. Don't worry . . . he has a small part too . . . ah, don't pay any attention to him."

The last remark was unnecessary. Luke had his good qualities. Of course, I'd much rather play Winkle (all that beer!) but Luke's part had great potential and as a novice he couldn't really expect very much.

"What ghastly neighbors! It's like another world. Why don't you all leave here and settle nearer a large city?"

I loathe people who become mystified by the obvious.

"Things aren't that bad," Ellen said. "City life would be intolerable . . . we'd never learn to accept it."

We walked back to the other house and Ellen made us sandwiches and hot chocolate. Homer spoke of his chances of getting into a good graduate school and then, after much hinting and open begging, agreed to analyze our dreams. Each of us described a dream we'd experienced recently, and Homer gamely attempted to explain them to us. I told him about Winkle and the bull's death, pretending it was a dream. Every detail seemed to make him squirm in his seat and when I explained that I practically had an orgasm watching the blood flow he had a fit.

"Good Christ, Barnum! What a thing to say in front of the children."

"Children!!!" I exclaimed . . . what an odd way to describe us. Model smiled and put her two cents in.

"Oh, I know all about that sex business . . . of course I'm not quite old enough for the real experience but sometimes when Cheeta touches me in the right place I get this fantastic . . ."

Homer cut her off.

"Yes . . . and what about you, Pauly?"

"I don't know. The usual stuff, I guess. Before I had this electricity thing figured out I used to fool around with animals in heat. There was this case history mentioned in Ellis' *Psychology of Sex* about a girl who put her whole arm up a mare's vaginal passage and experienced . . ."

"Ah, yes, yes I understand . . . no, no I don't want to hear another word! Ellen, haven't you instructed these girls in . . . well . . . with regard to . . . sex education!" he finally blurted it out.

"Now, Homer," Ellen spoke in her maternal tone. "When their father was around things were different. You've got to realize that these girls don't have any small boy friends to experiment with . . ."

"All things considered, we can only thank God for small favors," he cut her off and turned to face me.

I stepped behind him and blocked the door.

"I've decided you ought to leave this place as soon as possible," he stated in a quavering parody of the tone he wanted.

May, Ellen, and Pauly circled him. He looked around nervously, rubbed his forehead, and danced back and forth between us. A door slammed shut in the attic and he turned pale.

"Barnum, what's happened to you? You, the kids, Ellen, you're all suffering from some sort of mass hallucinations and I'm sure it has its roots in this miserable environment."

"Stop fidgeting, Homer," Model said.

"I am not fidgeting! The idea . . . telling Model her father was swallowed up by a pentagon. What nonsense! Next you'll be saying an apparition of some sort stepped out from the smoke and gobbled him alive . . ."

"No," Ellen said, "that's not *quite* what happened, but . . ."

"Stop it, stop it, stop it!!! May alone seems to be the only one who . . ."

May was very close to him by this time and I guess he noticed the glow in her eyes and the twisted smile that hinted more of malice than humor.

"P-P-Pauly is absolutely sad-sadis-sadistic (!) in her r-regard for human and animal life and she appears indifferent to the grossest forms of . . ."

"Knock it off, Homer," I stopped him. "You sound like a first term psych book."

He ignored me and turned to the others.

"You really think that life away from here would be unbearable. You're wrong! It's not. Believe me, it's not (we were all very close to him by now). You've been away from society too long. You've become different (we grabbed him). You're not like me . . . you're not like anyone . . . you're not . . ."

"By God, that's the truth," I said, and tried to clip his chin.

"Don't you understand what I'm talking about (he was gibbering like a wild animal by this time and saliva trickled from a corner of his mouth) . . . you're different . . . you're different!!! Eeeeeeoow!"

We finally had him down. I held him while May sang and bound his hands securely.

"Silent night . . . holy night . . . all is calm . . . all is bright."

I leaned over and whispered harshly in his ear.

"We really thought we could reach you. You poor, demented little animal, you don't even know we're trying to help you."

"Help me? Help me? (he was screaming in a shrill monotone). You think you're helping me??? You, with your false independence and your piddling vegetable gardens and your so-called library . . . you fools! This isn't utopia . . . it's myopia . . . let me go! Let me . . . mmmmmfff!"

I jammed a plum in his mouth and sealed his lips with adhesive tape. We trussed up his arms and legs and carried him into the bathroom. He squirmed on the floor like one of my ants on a slick of poisoned honey. The others left and I pulled out the plum because he was gagging. I expected him to start screaming again, but he only drooled a little. Peering into his eyes I could see the tiny pupils that hung suspended . . . small black balloons of sanity that dilated and contracted as my shadow passed in front of him. I nudged him once on the side, but he didn't move. Someone thought my name out loud so I left him there. The others were gathered around the fire and I joined them.

Cheetah, the other Cheetah, cackled to himself once in the attic and I felt the hair on my neck stand on end. Homer's scream was different and this time it ended in a gurgling sputter.

We got our message then and released ourselves from the joined bodies that leaned against each other by the fireplace. I looked down at the four fleshy masses and drifted up to the ceiling. The others were already there and we blended together (this time with the thought patterns of Homer — still in a daze about what was happening). I made a mental note to untie his body in the bathroom later on. Some time passed and Cheetah informed us that after a close reading he had decided to let us perform the *Glass Menagerie* next time. He gave me credit for having introduced Homer, but let me know he thought my original piece of writing, which we'd all been following, was lousy.

## EPILOGUE

It's been a long time now and Cheetah is restless again. We can all feel his uneasiness. Homer's thoughts have changed us all slightly and for the first time I tried to make a direct contact with the apparition in the attic. Cheetah, the dog, glared at me as I focused my attention to the attic. I was rebuffed for a few minutes, then allowed to come close for the first time that I could recall. Closer . . . closer . . . closer . . . aaaiiii!!! and ended up 'touching' my brother, who was in the middle of a dream back in Boston. I sensed his shriek of agony and my mother's alarm in the next room. I didn't try that again.

After a while we all had to get back into the bodies again and run through another play. That's one of the reasons we invite others up here for a 'visit' . . . so Cheetah can have us do a bigger production and watch it all through the eyes of the dog. Next on the agenda is *Tobacco Road* and things are looking up. Homer has been chosen to play the part of a degenerate sot of a farmer. It's really quite funny to imagine Homer as a kind of latter day Winkle. The thought of him playing a stupid sensual peasant has just made us all hysterical with laughter. We made so much noise that a car passing nearby pulled over to investigate. Model Child was giggling in a falsetto pitch that attracted their attention and they let themselves in through the front door. Any minute now I'm going to slip into my body and bid them all welcome and ask them if they'd like some hot chocolate. There are five of them, three men and two women . . . we may even end up with enough for a musical comedy. Wouldn't *that* be something?

## HAIKU

It took me three songs  
to find you,  
wren in a crab-apple tree.

Jody Norton

These leaves are tree bones  
Of mothers too old to bear—  
Love in wasted age.

Jorge Jaxon

The dew in the morn—  
Pearls upon the spider's web.  
A sparkling death.

Tom Crowe

Black speck hawk on blue,  
Circling in the brass-hot sky—  
Can you catch me love?

Jorge Jaxon

## THE DAY COMMANDER WHITEHEAD SHAVED HIS BEARD

James Cortese

*There is no noble love but that which recognizes itself to be both short-lived and exceptional.*

—Albert Camus

### I.

My love has wire frames  
And needles made like pins  
That fickle in the Sunday wade  
And holiday of sins.

Oh, your plum and pear,  
The figleaf of your heart:  
We bud like dew on Summer grass  
Where lovers come and part.

Where lovers never come  
And part, the sea it seems  
Grows tired, bored with all such roll  
And runs in silver streams

Through the willow woodness  
Of this essential strife  
And strafe of Benjamin DeBole  
Who ate the pulp of life,  
The substance of his soul.

## II.

Oh, those happy days  
Behind the blinking chick  
Where early love grew like a flame  
Upon a candlewick

Of hate, where you and I,  
But tools of rat and rave  
And toys of polyethylene,  
Harpy-chewed but brave,

Outloved the proper fools,  
Destroyed their house of ice  
And climbed the peak of Sinai  
To rot in Paradise.

So great and grand design,  
That echoes in my brain,  
To reverberate like chocolate  
To piddle like the rain.

## III.

You cannot really say  
Before you stop to muse  
That God has sent us barrel hoops,  
Deodorant and booze.

You cannot really say  
Our teeth are not so real,  
Our genitals not safe in love  
To see as well as feel.

For though they put the house  
Of love where none can see  
Nor ever hope to find again  
The valve of ecstasy,



Yet you are like these breasts,  
Unbared in noonday light,  
With tips like taut eraser heads  
And skin of marble white.

The truth may never tell  
That what is true is fair:  
The lesson of a lecher's art  
Foresees the pubic hair.

Foresees the pulse and urge  
That in your blood must merge,  
That in the lemon-tree of love,  
Where birds sing songs of joy,  
The wind at midnight plays a dirge  
For all that we destroy.

## IN WINTER

Robert D. Ruplenas

In winter, oaks and maples, crowned  
with death, throw up their frenzied fingers to the sky;  
naked, black, stiff, gnarled, storm-tossed at arboreal  
height.

In silent death their only sound  
The fierce wind through them, an unearthly pleading cry  
as though they may, with sound and fury, refute  
advancing night.

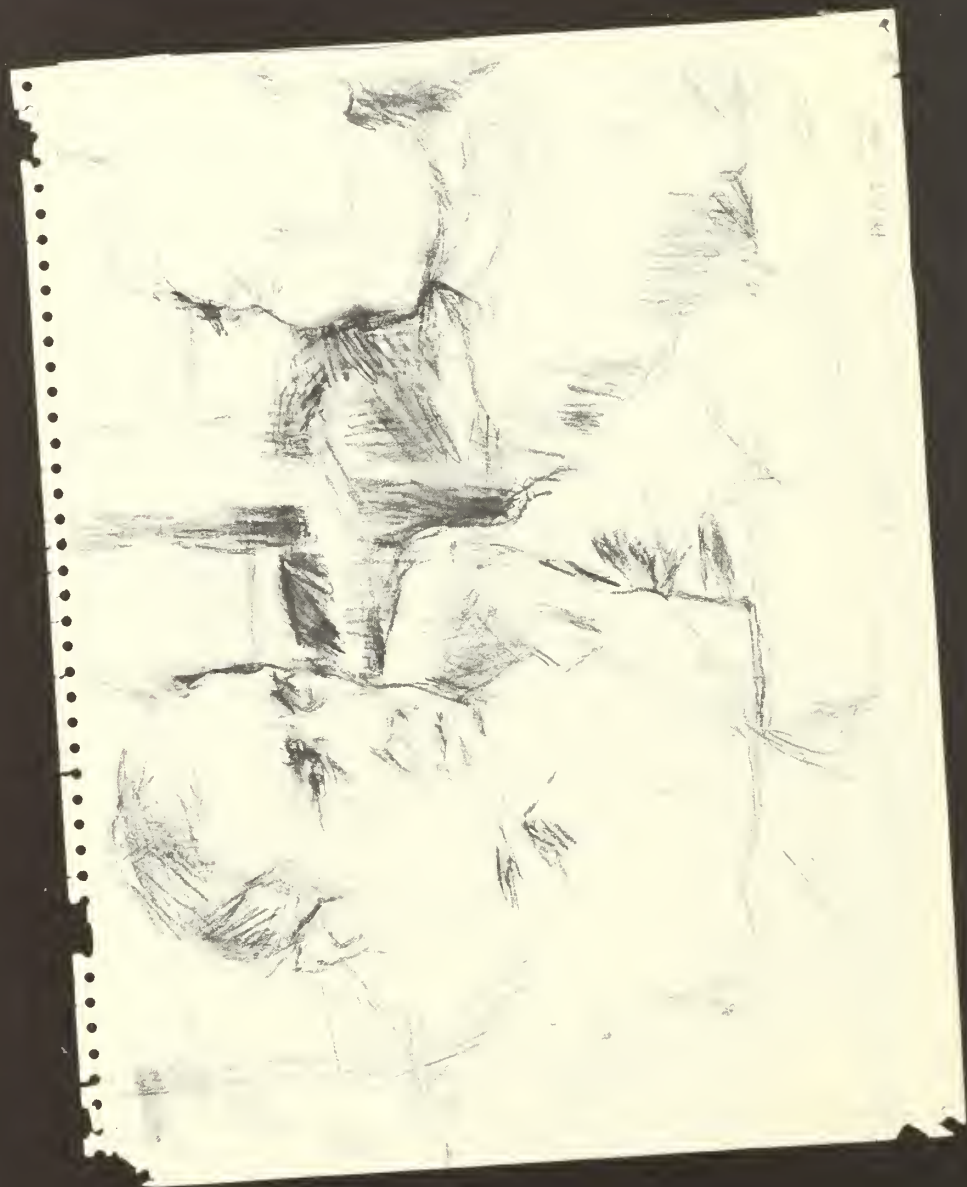












# THE LIGHT OF THE BODY IS THE EYE

Gregory Fitzgerald

*"But O the truth, the truth!  
the many eyes  
That look on it! the diverse things  
they see."*

—George Meredith

The annual convention of the Modern Language Association was in session, and the cocktail lounge of the Sheraton-Plaza Hotel buzzed with scholarly talk and with the blandishments of sincere administrators busily recruiting college teachers— with the help of dry martinis — for the coming academic year.

A florid, stout man threaded his way through the crowd until he stood in the middle of the smoky din, his eyes searching. Across his line of vision undulated a peroxide blonde waitress carrying a tray full of drinks, and he followed her with his eyes to the other side of the cocktail lounge.

"Byron Hilliard! Over here, Byron!" The voice belonged to a gaunt, tweedy man wearing dark glasses, who stood up at a table in the corner and waved a nicotine-yellowed hand.

The stout man stared for a moment, then walked slowly and hesitantly to the table in the corner.

"Ira? Ira Magnuson? It is you, isn't it, Ira?"

"Of course it's me, Byron! Have I changed so?" Ira Magnuson removed his dark glasses for a moment and looked into the other man's face.

"Well, well, Ira — it must be the dark glasses," he said, staring into the shiny dark mirrors that shielded the other man's eyes. But Byron Hilliard could see only his own reflection. "And you've lost some weight, haven't you?"

"I weighed one hundred and seventy-five pounds when we were in graduate school together, Byron," he said, crushing out his cigarette. "Now I'm down to one hundred and forty." He took a fresh cigarette from the blue pack of mentholated filter tips that lay ready on the table. "Smoke?"

"No thanks — gave it up two years ago."

Ira Magnuson lit his cigarette from the second match. "Well, let's order a drink. Waitress!" He held up his right hand and beckoned imperiously.

"Never mind the drink, Ira. It's a bit early for me to begin drinking — I never touch it before three."

"Sir?" said the waitress, her jaws champing a wad of gum.

Byron Hilliard smiled at her. "How nice we have such a pretty waitress!"

The waitress stood on one leg looking down at him. "I love my husband, sir. What'll you have?"

Byron Hilliard took a handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose. "Ginger ale, please," he said into the handkerchief.

"But, Byron! This is a special occasion! It's more than five years since we've had a drink together. Why, you were a great tippler in graduate school — don't tell me you've developed an academic stomach?"

"No, it's not that. . . ."

"Anything else, sir?" interrupted the waitress, her jaws moving regularly.

"Cancel this gentleman's ginger ale and bring him a bourbon old fashioned instead. Now, Byron, don't object — I haven't forgotten bourbon's your favorite. Remember that night at the Dean Bright's when you drank ten old fashioned, then made a pass at his . . .?"

"Anything else, sir?" She dumped the heap of cigarette butts onto her tray.

"A double Gibson for me, please," said Ira Magnuson.

"Really, Ira, I can't . . ." Byron Hilliard's eyes followed the swaying hips of the waitress all the way to the bar.

"It's too late now, Byron. Just relax," he said, his hand shaking slightly as he drank the remains of his Gibson, "just relax."

Byron Hilliard began to drum gently on the table top with his finger-tips. "I must say that I was quite surprised to hear your

voice on the telephone. You were so . . . so completely unexpected. Why, I haven't seen you at one of these conventions since . . . since . . . well, for years."

"I wouldn't be here now, but I'm looking for a job." Ira Magnuson lifted the empty glass and let the last drop of Gibson trickle slowly into his mouth.

"You're looking for another teaching position? But aren't you happy at State? Everyone says that teaching loads there are reasonable, salaries are excellent, and the library. . . ."

"It isn't that, Byron," Ira removed the dark glasses and began to polish them with a be-roostered cocktail napkins, "it isn't that at all."

The waitress arrived with their drinks. Ira looked at her automatically. Suddenly he twitched involuntarily and hurriedly replaced his dark glasses. The drinks in front of them, it was Ira who found his money first and paid.

"No promotions?" asked Byron Hilliard, observing how the waitress swayed over to the next table. "I can see that you might give me . . ." his voice trailed off hesitantly.

The other man stirred his old fashioned round and round, then round again. "Are you in some kind of trouble, Ira?"

"Trouble? Well, yes, I suppose that's the way to describe it. It's all very, very complicated."

"You're not in trouble over a . . . over a woman?" Byron Hilliard sipped his drink thoughtfully. "By the way, Ira, how's Alice?"

"Alice?" Ira Magnuson adjusted his dark glasses. "Didn't you hear about the divorce? I thought everybody knew."

"I did hear some sort of rumor — but didn't give it much credence."

"She's living in Chicago — married a psychiatrist."

"Hmm. And what about you, Ira?"

"Me? No, I've not remarried."

"I see. Well, are you going to? Should you, perhaps?"

"Byron! That's not the kind of trouble I meant — not exactly, anyway. What I mean is — I just want to get away from State. It's too — I just don't want to stay. . . The trouble is that. . . Anyway, Byron, I want to leave State as soon as possible."

"I see, I see. Well now, I don't think we're going to have a single opening that you'd be qualified for — perhaps next year — but not

now. You know how the legislature always cuts our budget."

"All I really want from you, Byron, is a letter of recommendation. With your reputation as a scholar it would mean a great deal. And Byron, I've done well — published three articles . . ."

"Is there any scandal, Ira?"

"Scandal?" Ira Magnuson lit another cigarette. "What do you mean by that?"

"You know perfectly well what I mean, Ira. Is it anything like that business with Professor Serkin's wife when we were in graduate school? After all, Ira, what am I to think? You've changed so, and those dark glasses. . . . Why *are* you wearing dark glasses? Do you have some sort of eye trouble? Or is there some angry husband . . .?"

The waitress swirled by and Ira caught her by the arm. "Another round, please."

"Really, Ira, I can't," said Byron Hilliard, who hadn't finished his first old fashioned. "I'm meeting Peale in the Coffee Shoppe in fifteen minutes. . . ."

"It isn't the kind of scandal you think it is. Byron, give me a chance, won't you? The way you're acting shows a pretty short memory. No, no, I won't go over the old ground again now, but don't you owe me a hearing — considering how long we've known each other — and considering what we've been through together in the past? No, no, don't worry — I'm not even going to mention that nasty business about your dissertation. All right, I can see that you've made good as a scholar, and obviously I haven't — but that shouldn't . . ."

Byron Hilliard smoothed the hair on his temples with chubby fingers.

"Of course, Ira. I'm sorry," he said softly. "Peale can wait. Now tell me all about it — exactly what is the trouble at State?"

"I'm . . . I'm not sure how to begin. . . ."

"Why don't you just try?"

"Byron, they think . . . Byron, they think I'm crazy!"

"What makes them think that, Ira?" Byron Hilliard said, watching his swizzle stick making grooves in the paper doily.

"It's because I — I really don't know how to put it — it all sounds so incredible. I'm afraid that when I tell you, you might agree with them."

Byron Hilliard made a deprecatory gesture with his hand.



"Well, Ira, why don't you tell me what it is before you jump to any conclusions?"

"Byron, will you just *try* to believe me?"

"Of course I will, Ira." The corners of his mouth creased upward. "Of course I will!"

This time the waitress had reached the table with the drinks before Byron Hilliard noticed her. While she removed his unfinished first drink, he watched her with narrowed eyes.

"How about that, Ira?" said Byron Hilliard in a confidential tone, after she was gone. "Nice chest, what?"

"Falsies. Nothing but stuffing."

"Oh, I don't think so, Ira. They look perfectly natural."

"Believe me, Byron," he pulled off the dark glasses and waggled them at his companion emphatically, "they're fake, completely fake." Ira Magnuson placed the glasses gently on the table and drank half of his third double Gibson.

"On the contrary, Ira, they're quite typical, natural specimens of the female mammalian glands. . . ."

"Not so! They're falsies!"

"Look here, Ira, what makes you so damned sure? Was she in one of your seminars or something?" Byron Hilliard took a large swallow of his old fashioned.

"Never saw her before in my life, but believe me, they're fake."

"You're crazy — they look perfectly real. . . ."

"'Crazy'? You too? Ah, I should have known, I should have known it would turn out like this. When you tell the truth, everybody thinks you're insane — nobody will listen, and everybody turns against you; they want to put you in a madhouse! Oh, I should have known better. . . ."

"What the hell are you talking about, Ira?"

"That waitress — I said she's wearing falsies, and it's true, I can see them!"

"See them? Well, so can I, and I still say they're real."

"Why won't you understand? Listen to me, Byron! *I can see through her clothes!*"

Byron Hilliard's jaw twitched slightly, then after a moment he said, "So that's what you people are doing up at State — developing some sort of X-ray glasses that penetrate cloth? And that's why you're wearing those silly-looking dark glasses! Well, well, Ira, it's

quite an idea, quite an idea. Can you see the actual flesh? I mean, does it show the surface of the skin? Here, let me try those glasses on for a minute."

"No, it's not the glasses, Byron — here, see for yourself," and he handed over the dark glasses. Byron Hilliard turned in his chair trying to find their waitress. "It's my own two eyes, Byron. It's as if I had a kind of second sight. The glasses are a special prescription, designed to shut it all out — to keep my sight relatively normal — but somewhat darkened, of course."

"Hmm." Byron Hilliard returned the glasses. "Nothing. I couldn't see a thing out of the ordinary or 'special' about them. Quite a bit darker, that's all."

"I told you what the glasses are really for — to prevent my second sight."

"Now Ira, don't you think this has gone far enough?"

"Don't you . . . ? You don't believe me, do you?"

"Really, Ira, you can't be serious . . . ?"

"Damn it, Byron, I'll prove it to you!" He drained the last of his Gibson. "Waitress! Waitress!"

"Ira! Don't be a fool! Surely you wouldn't ask her . . . ? There'll be a scene!"

Ira removed the dark glasses and shook them at the other man. "How else can I make you believe me . . . ?"

"Sir?" the waitress said, chewing bovinely and placing their drinks in front of them after spilling about an ounce of the Gibson.

"Aren't you . . . ? Don't you have . . . ?" Ira began.

"Huh?" she said, mopping up the spill with a smelly, graying rag.

"No, don't, Ira!" interrupted Byron Hilliard. "Please don't!"

Ira Magnuson looked at his companion for a moment, then at the waitress. "Nothing. Never mind. It's nothing," he said finally.

As the waitress made her way back to the crowded bar, Byron Hilliard let his breath escape sharply.

"The penetrating vision's not so clear when I drink a lot." Ira whipped off the dark glasses and shook them at his companion. "That's why . . ."

"Why are you standing up, Ira? What are you going to do?"

Ira moved slowly around the table until he stood above the other man. He scrutinized Byron Hilliard as a meat inspector might

examine a carcass hanging in the slaughterhouse. "I'm going to prove it to you," he said.

"Sit down, Ira, everybody's watching you!" he replied *sotto voce*.

Ira returned to his seat and lit a cigarette as he studied his companion. "You're wearing a truss, aren't you, Byron?"

For a moment Byron Hilliard did not reply. Then he said, "All right — so you guessed it. Look here, Ira, haven't you had a bit too much to drink . . .?"

"Furthermore," said Ira, ignoring the interruption, "you've a wart on your left shoulder, here . . . and a birthmark there on your right side — there, precisely there," and he reached over and very quickly yanked at the other's shirt. The shirt tail came out of the pants revealing a fold of fat on Byron Hillard's patch of bare stomach that was blotched purple with the telltale birthmark.

"Stop it, Ira! Stop it!" said the other, stuffing his shirt back into his pants.

"And you've a black leather wallet in your breast pocket containing an address book, some bills . . ."

"That's enough, Ira. That's enough," he looked around to see if anyone had noticed his exposure. "Have you been studying parlor magic? That's quite a trick, you know."

"Byron, I've been trying to tell you all along — it's *not* a trick. It all began just after I went to State . . ."

"I see," Byron looked at his watch ostentatiously. "This is all very interesting, Ira, but I really must meet Peale — why, I'm late already!"

Ira reached across the table and seized him by the wrist. "Don't go, Byron, don't go. You must hear me out!"

The other man subsided into his chair. "Ira, you're hurting my arm."

"Sorry, old man." He lit another cigarette. "Oh, Byron, if you only knew what I've been through — it's a curse, a damnable curse!"

"Yes, yes, of course, Ira," said the other, humoring him.

"The temptation to tell people all about it — to talk it over with someone — anyone who might understand — it's almost irresistible for a man with a temperament like mine. . . . But then it always turns out the same — no one ever believes me; they find some way to give my . . . my — what can I call it? — my 'second sight'? some kind

of ridiculous yet rational explanation. After that they always tell me to see a psychiatrist."

"Well, is that such a . . .?"

"So, I went to a psychiatrist for several months. He recommended that I go to live in a nudist colony — you know, where I wouldn't have this problem — but I told him I didn't want to live in a nudist colony, I just wanted to get rid of this . . . this . . . damned power and live a normal life. During one of my first sessions with the psychiatrist he told me that mine was a very unusual case, one of the most interesting he'd ever had, and after I had accurately described what lurked behind the curtains, his drapes, and his upholstery he made a complete list of the kinds of cloth I could see through: cotton, wool silk — you know, the whole lot of them — except for some of the synthetics — can't see through all of them, naturally. He said he wanted to write an article about it for his journal. . . . Then he sidled up to me and told me all about how he had just advertised for a new receptionist and would I mind helping him out so he'd be sure to hire someone with the right qualifications. . . . I told him no, he'd have to do his own investigating — even though I'd miss out on the two free sessions he offered on the couch — no, Byron, not with the receptionist! It seemed only then that he began to doubt me. . . . When my wife came by his office that day to pick me up, I introduced her to the doctor and she invited him home to dinner. He turned out to be the man she married after our divorce, you know. . . . Ah, you can't imagine what it's been like! The rumors about one's sanity. . . . Everyone is so suspicious that you're forced to turn to drink so the gossips can have a 'rational' explanation for your actions — it was then I discovered that if I drank enough, the power weakened; if I got good and plastered, it went away altogether — until I was dead sober again. But drinking is dangerous, too — it can cost you your job (as it nearly did mine!), and naturally everyone watches you, constantly, unceasingly. And the whispering! They've all heard through the grapevine that you've some kind of delusion, so they're all peering and prying, waiting for some sign of it. So you've got to be careful, so very, very careful not to give anything away — not to betray the fact that you can see through their outer finery to their pathetic, ludicrous frailties of the flesh — frailties they're trying to conceal — frailties that nature has imposed on them and which they resent — ah, it's a



damnable curse when a man must constantly pretend that he *doesn't* see the truth. No man believes someone else can perceive what he himself is blind to."

Byron Hilliard began to get to his feet. "Ira, there's Peale over there in the doorway." Ira leaned over the table and placing his hand on the other's shoulder, pushed him back down into the chair.

"He's leaving, Byron. He didn't see you. You must stay, you must!" Ira tamped out his cigarette and immediately lit another. "Can you imagine what it's like? Do you suppose it's pleasant to be able to see every prosthesis, every artificial limb, every falsy — no matter how cleverly concealed it is — every piece of posterior padding, every corset and truss that crosses your gaze? Do you imagine that it's fun to see with your own eyes how people try to deceive the world with trumped-up appearances, to discover that there are so many cheats in the world, to see everyone stripped naked? It's caused me nothing but trouble — it's a curse, I tell you, a curse! How happy is man with his illusions!"

"Oh, I don't know about that, Ira. Wouldn't you get many a view that's denied the rest of us?"

"Distracting. Terribly distracting — you can't imagine how difficult it is to concentrate on research — with all those coeds. . . ."

"Oh, I shouldn't mind *that*!"

". . . and of course, nobody believes it — everyone thinks I'm crazy, or even worse: a pervert! Do you know why Alice divorced me? Right at the beginning of the whole business I tried to explain it all to her. To give her an example of what I meant, I told her that Doris Harney, her best friend, had a wen on her left breast. Do you know what Alice did? She got so angry that I just couldn't reason with her — she claimed that I must have been sleeping with Doris to know a thing like that! When I tried to explain to Alice that I had somehow developed this strange power to see through clothes, she called me a damned liar. Why Byron, it's been just awful! I've been accused of being a peeping Tom, a pervert, a maniac — everything. Believe me, I've reached the point where I've not been anxious to tell anybody about it — not even you. But I thought — I remembered the old days, and I thought that you, of all people. . . ."

"Hmmm. Well, of course . . . but, it all seems quite fantastic. . . ."

"Believe me, Byron, when I find another job, nobody at the new college will ever learn from me that I possess this power — you can depend on that. It's been too awful."

"Quite right, Ira, quite right. But I don't see how I can be of any help with your problem."

"But you can, Byron. I've already told you I need a strong letter of recommendation so I can find another position — get a fresh start where nobody knows me. A letter of recommendation written by a man with your scholarly reputation would open many an academic door. . . ."

"Perhaps you exaggerate my importance a bit, Ira. But then, nearly everyone's read my last book. . . . I tell you what, Ira, I'll think it over," he looked at his wrist watch.

"You'll think it over . . . ? But Byron, I'm desperate!"

The stout man stood up. "Of course, Ira, of course. I'll see what I can do about it. Now really, I must run."

"Wait! Just one more thing, before you go." The stout man yielded reluctantly, as the wedding guest did to the Ancient Mariner, and sat down again. "You don't think I'm some kind of . . . of anomaly, do you? As for me — I just can't believe I am. Why should such a power be given to me only? It just doesn't seem logical. I mean, who am I to have this ability all alone? I'm beginning to think that perhaps it may not be so unique! How could it be, if I have it? I'm not a fisherman or a carpenter — just a plain, ordinary college professor. Couldn't there be other people in the world who possess this power too? Listen, Byron — how many people do you suppose have twenty-fifteen vision? I haven't the exact statistics, but certainly there couldn't be very many; yet such powerful vision isn't unique, is it? No, I think there must be some others like me — not many perhaps — but here and there in the world there must be a few people who possess similar, perhaps even greater, powers of penetrative vision. And if their lives have been upset by their power to see through things — the way mine has — why then perhaps they've been silent about it for sheer self protection! Certainly I'm going to be mum about it in the future. These other seers — they'd be fools to let the rest of the world know, if the world's going to make them suffer for it, wouldn't they? Might not that be the reason you've never heard of anything like this before? Think about that, Byron, will you, when you write that letter?"

"Well, I really don't know, Ira. I'll have to think it over. It's all so . . . so inconceivable. Wouldn't you be better off to remain at State? After all, you have tenure and they seem to be accustomed to you there. . . ."

"You still don't believe it!" His voice rose shrilly, "Do you want more proof? He pulled off the unique dark glasses with a gesture of exasperation, and stood up threateningly.

"Shhh! For God's sake, Ira! Everyone's watching us. Now let me go — I must run!"

"You will write the letter?"

"Well, Ira . . . I'll have to consider it very carefully. You must realize that I have a considerable reputation to maintain. . . ." He stood up, touching the back of the chair lightly, apparently anxious to get away. "In the event that I decide to . . . to write the letter, just where do you want me to send it?"

"To Bryn Mawr, Byron."

"Bryn Mawr? But that's a woman's college! My God, Ira — how could you?"

"What do you want me to do? Apply to a men's college? Do you think I'm a homosexual or something?"

"A homosexual? No, no, of course not! Bryn Mawr. Well, Ira, I see what you mean. And now I've got to go." He leaned across the table and shook Ira's hand hastily. "Nice seeing you again — great reunion, great." He turned and walked away slowly. At the entrance to the lounge he passed a woman who stood framed in the doorway wearing an original Oleg Cassini creation. Byron Hilliard turned to scrutinize her legs, but when he noticed that Ira was watching him, he hurried away.

Just as Ira was replacing his glasses, the peroxide blonde waitress who swayed by him carrying a tray full of drinks, jostled his elbow. The specially made dark glasses slipped from Ira's fingers and fell to the floor. When he retrieved them, both lenses were broken.



## LINES DASHED OFF IN A THICKET

*Believed to be written by  
W\*ll\*\*m W\*rdsw\*rth and  
recently discovered under  
a mossy rock at Grasmere.*

Really and truly composed while sitting in a briar thicket that received my falling body which had plummeted sixty feet from an open window upon the impetus applied by a gigantic woman who happened to be my wife. W.W.

I heard the symphony of birds,  
As in a mossy dell I lay  
And picked upon a chicken bone  
And contemplated Nature's way.

She takes us by our children's hands  
Through bush and field and meadow's streams  
To see the hawks on rabbits fall,  
To hear the final squeals and screams.

Through winding woodland paths  
The sumac trails its glist'ning bine;  
And 'tis the truth that every flower  
Reveals a stinger in its shine.

The birds above me flapped and cooed,  
Their plans I think I see,  
For now the drops from branches high  
Rain down, sweet birds, on me.

The filamented spider's web  
Swings in the windy air  
And drops its thorny occupant  
Unseen into my hair.

The earthquake and tidal waves,  
The hurricane with gentle fan;  
Kind Nature sends indulgently  
To romp and play with man.

—James Cortese

## A LITERARY MONSTER UPON FINNEGAN'S WAKE

*for John Holden, Il Miglior Penseroso*

James Neylon

*Everyman. Gentill knowledge, what do ye it call?  
Knowledge. It is a garment of sorrowe.*

He— a skeleton key, I— locked beyond  
the anagram, went for beers after work.  
During the conversation I listened  
as he praised Shem, derided Shaun.  
(Yang and Yin?) I sided with Shem,  
meaning sham, shame, Shamus, James.  
Ovid drove Shem out of don Daedalus,  
who made things and moved in a maze,  
was a coward and a romantic who  
denied his origins for sexual reasons—  
Ashplant and arrogance about as tenuous  
as the wax wings of Icarus, or Satan's case,  
which to this day he pleads, still pacing Dis,  
not once having repeated himself, not once.  
O John! poor Daedalus — as Greek a case  
as Europa's was who shunned the phallus.  
How Homer was prophetic! Somewhere between  
Cerberus, Beatrice and the lithe Sirenes,  
leaving aside the Japanese Tea Service,  
Plato stands in an alabaster trance,  
like Themis, say, asking us to believe,  
believe in the yarn ball of the heart's best Good.  
Brother Ass, you come between the ears  
with headlines "wrong from the start." Impossible  
that after so much tedium with these brews,  
where a mere bottle of beer could swallow me up,

someone with moist hands should come and say,  
"Here is your coat. You left it at my house  
some years ago, and you have shivered since."

NOTE: John said it was OK to use his name. Acknowledgements are still due to the following persons: Tantalus, Venus the fly-trapper, Rochefoucauld at his desk with THE WASTE LAND in one hand and THE OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE in the other. Also to Ovid, the Placenta, and some incomprehensible book of Chinese philosophy, archaeology and dentistry.

## PIPING IN SUMMER

Roland Laramée

We seek relief from heat  
that sweats the eye  
and presses lungs.  
Should we hold our breath  
to end this oven term?

But come, no humid talk.  
Let's bear the heat with disregard  
for plenitudes. Half a lung-full  
is wind enough to play upon one's pipe.

You would listen to me play?

Thank you. I think we might be friends.  
What's this? You whistle a few distracted notes,  
yourself, now and again? Yes, it passes time.  
But this is my own tune, you see,  
though it sounds like others.  
Part of my pleasure is tinkering  
with these notes to make them at once  
more familiar and yet more mine.

A strange plaything, this whistle, you're right.  
Most men put aside such things  
and give up the random sounds  
of youth's heedless fingers  
on these common stops.  
Why, then, now in the shade of this oak?  
Let's just say the summer's hot  
and piping stays complaint.

## LOVE IS A SUMMER WITH FALLTIME AFTER

Jorge Jaxon

We lay in the loin wonder of half light,  
Crooning why into pregnant dark,  
Begetting shadows to linger sinister  
Far into the running night

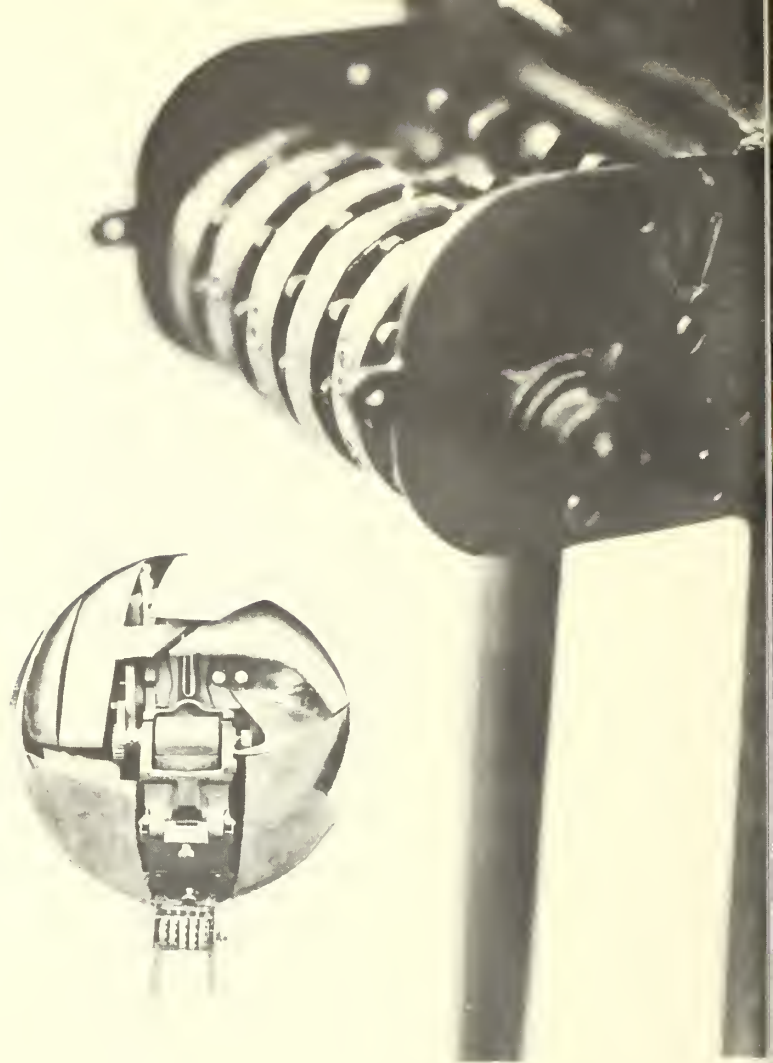
Until first light swept cutting sharp  
Through rents in patched shades  
To mark each day another day  
In the cool of our worn room.

And why in setting afternoon,  
Turning to seascapes of shredded sun,  
Could we not see tomorrow  
In the turning world?

Those sands Time wanted us to share  
Have slid to the sea  
So long since  
That even gulls come no more,

Yet still the open water  
Choked with fog in nodding night  
Spreads far to where,  
But never back to when.







# LOVE SONG FROM CHARON'S BARQUE

Jack Eliot Myers

*—for Nancy*

Across the streaming sour moon  
she sails her fig black twisted barque  
by a torch of moss and squinted eyes  
lionized in the salt of a sunless odyssey.

She hears in the hark bite beaten spray  
of silence rinse the chortled call of gulls  
raked through shredded clouds fall  
to rust on rocks ringing loud in iron mockery.

Her ratchet twisted heart crisped  
in that wince of pain  
wheeled from blasted bluff  
and flushed down sheeted wind  
to lie deep and hushed  
among the stilted critters  
skittering over feathered bits of bones.

Where children bury these dead at play  
her wounded mouth hung wet,  
the unkissed bleeding oriole  
fallen from the sun,  
and her unkeeled barque poised mirrored  
drips on the face in the knuckling glass.

## INNOCENCE

Lois Boyles

And then I shall run  
b a r e f o o t  
through the coolandscratchy sands  
d o w n  
to the seaweedy emerald water  
And catch a wave between my toes  
to be captive for eternity  
With salt in my streaming hair  
and I, clothed in starfish and kelp, will grasp a conch shell  
that holds the winds of yesterday  
and listen with innocence  
while you whisper to me the secret of life  
and then I will  
L a u g h .

## HOW IS IT WITH A COW WHEN LOVE DIES

James Neylon

You stood still for a while  
then went to masticate  
behind a tree. You walked  
easier then, secure  
in the feel of my hand,  
the impress that I left  
on a chair or a person.  
Now, dusting flies you go  
in cow phantasies,  
in sunlight, all your grass  
in all your stomachs you dream  
of winter and the barn,  
the smell of oil lamps,  
the way things used to be  
before the machines came.

## CALIBAN

J. A. Gron

The first came brushing against our faces, tippeting lightly over  
our hair,

And then up, quivering in ecstasy at the plebian light we read by,  
Almost within the encroaching wood and the pure fall of darkness.

In a kind of fear before their blind intensity we waved away the  
dancers,

But it was not these forms squatted in the pooled radiance of the  
light they sought.

The fire, exploding the black, commanded the moths in —  
Now sensuous, cajoling, now leaping in fury if they slowed —  
Its brilliance beckoned them to their death.

And they came, rejoicing in the sacrificial dance,

Each bearer to throw down before the demon the ultimate gift  
of beauty —

Of patterned wing and ruby eye.

Close they came, and then away —

Now high, now dipping down near to the flame,

Until one, overfilled with the mad exultant joy of the consuming  
light,

Fell and was gone, and the rest too dropped, one by one.

But as we watched, from beyond the silent trees an apparition came  
flapping —

Another dancer, but he came late.

An adventurer! — ragged he was with half-healed wounds,

And on cluttered course he came in, stumpy wings stuttering in his  
haste.

But he did not approach us —  
He had come only for a violent and unbearably beautiful death like  
all the others.  
And so in the mesmeric glowing center of the flames he sought a  
landing place,  
Not in flight, but in the desperate paroxysms of need.  
And we laughed at his clumsy desiring, dousing the light,  
And we ran back to the familiar circle of tents.  
We left behind us the lone dancer  
Somewhere back in the encroaching trees and the pure fall of  
darkness.

## ON VISITING "THE NEW BOSTON"

Carl Sharpe

Her greasy hairline shook  
In rhythm with a gum-stuffed jaw  
Humming a bee-bop tune.  
She pushed a screaming baby carriage  
Past my bench  
With the maternity dress wiggle  
Of an aging city tart—  
Once the desire  
Of some leather-skinned  
Pizza Palace Palamon—  
And now,  
His wife.

## HOMECOMING

Jorge Jaxon

*Is there anything more  
frightening than talking  
alone in an empty house?  
—de Maupassant*

Summer's last fly on the fruit bowl  
And I a stranger in my father's house;  
Before the glassless window  
I pause and probe my toothache mind  
To tongue the pain of memory.

Time is the now that goes hooting  
Express through tomorrow  
Waving weeds along the right of way but once,  
And turning ever into amber memories  
Up merging silvered tracks of when.

White and dripping roses dying,  
The trellis haunts the grey of moonlit grass  
And all the hours of world enough  
Lie heaped in silent cluttered alleys.  
Moon must fade and comes the frost.



## SOME THOUGHTS ON A FIVE HUNDREDTH HOME RUN

Henry Sirotin

His name is Willie. I mean, his *christened* name is Willie. Now right there, that tells you something. Some kids are named Willie. But they don't come from Oak Park, or Dearborn, or Levittown, or Shaker Heights. Where you find a Chevy next to that Chrysler in the garage, it's William, or Bill, or sometimes Will; but it's never Willie. Willie is uptown, or South Side, or wherever "How do you like your coffee?" has meanings not fit for any ladies' auxiliary.

But even there, it's restricted. On 125th Street you'll find Colemans, Wilburs, LeDongs — but no Willies. And you sure won't find Willies on Sugar Hill. No, Willie is more 112th, off Madison.

But this particular Willie didn't come from that particular block, though he might have. He came from a place a long way south — a place which a generation later would be known, almost as if it were its official name, as Bull Connor's Birmingham. His father worked steel, and played a little ball. Our Willie might have worked steel, and played a little ball, too. But he could do two things William in Grosse Point couldn't do: Hit a ball far enough to lose it, and run fast enough and sure enough to catch it. (Later, when he made the big time, he would play with the kids in the street. He would hit one seven sewers, and they said that even the Babe, when he was really grooving, only went for six.)

So the men who notice such things noticed Willie, and he started on the long road up. The rest of the story really isn't that important, and most of you have probably heard it. If not, step out to Shea some day when he's in town, and listen to the crowd when the announcer comes on with "For San Francisco, number 24 . . ." If you hear the rest, you're lucky. Because of that noise, and because he can hit a ball a lot further a lot more often than anyone else, he's paid a hundred grand a year.

And that's funny. Because that hundred grand comes from people who pay to do nothing more than screech their throats sore when Willie tags one. People named William.

## MAS VALE TENER QUE DESEAR

James Cortese

After your eyes, what  
had become volcanic, making  
fools of gods and drowning  
the thunder of the sea?

Beside you, in your arms,  
there among the balsams  
and whistling goosegrass,  
such ecstasies and lies;  
and after it all, sadness  
and after that, parting  
at moonfall and gullcall  
on the cool scrubbed sand:

you retreated across the shore,  
antennae waving madly  
and raised claws clicking.  
Gone, my little lobster,  
to suppurate in seaweed  
to defecate with clams.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**JAMES CORTESE** (Lines Dashed Off In a Thicket, Mas Vale Tener Que Desear, The Day Commander Whitehead Shave Off His Beard) admits to writing "imitative verse", in addition, we believe, to long titles. He also confesses to a desire to "write a dirty novel, move to Paris and set up a pad on the left bank," but until his ship comes in, Jim will probably remain an English major at UMass.

**JORGE JAXON** (Love Is a Summer With Falltime After, Homecoming, two Haiku's) defines the foundation of his philosophy as "a reverence for roosters, pumpkin ice cream, and Oregon." With such shaky foundations, his verse is characterized by what he terms "the haunting ambiguity of knowing that I don't know where I am." Jorge adds that, under the circumstances, he is glad to be someone else most of the time.

**JOHN MILMORE** (Concierto de Outlawe) asks that we present the following word for word:

. what prosey masque or where I go . need we dig vorticism  
we need dig the vortex waist length hair'd prettiest Elspeth  
is my lady, now drive we over the roads with by the side  
of 'em all flowers cheering.

(Your wish is granted, John.)

**JACK ELIOT MYERS** (Love Song from Charon's Barque, Concierto de Aranjuez) spent part of a semester at UMass before leaving (by way of sunny Mexico, which seems to have a special attraction for Jack) to edit a trade journal in the Boston area. "Concierto" is part of Jack's experimentation with the fusion of poetry and music "to add new dimensions to the Art Experience", and is intended to complement Miles Davis' symphony of the same name. "Love Song" is intended for Bartok and Weber in the same manner. Earlier in the semester, WMUA carried a program with these and other of Jack's poems and their appropriate music, in conjunction with John Milmore and the CANTO series (WTBS-Cambridge).

BURGESS NEEDLE (The Aerie) "has, since first blinking owlishly at this world, been filled with a desire to crawl back." His current work in progress may turn out to be a rebuttal to Terry Southern. "The Aerie" is Burgess' third prose contribution to *Cæsure* in as many issues, but, since there must be an end to everything, he is bound to graduate sometime.

JAMES NEYLON (A Literary Monster Upon Finnegans Wake, How It Is With a Cow When Love Dies) has been one of *Cæsure's* most constant poetry contributors. A resident of West Springfield, Jim consistently finds time to submit to *Cæsure* in the midst of other poetical duties. (Sorry, Jim, we can't seem to locate your letter about yourself.)

JODY NORTON (Haiku) may be remembered as the cover artist for the Fall of 1963 *Cæsure*, as well as two collages in that issue's art section. A UMass English major, Jody also seeks expression through other media, and many of his poems are intended to be complemented by suitable art.

ROBERT D. RUPLINAS (In Winter) remains a UMass zoology major, although he admits that his interests in music, which he terms a passion for Gilbert and Sullivan Operetta, and in English, may yet turn him to the humanities.

CARL SHARPE (On Visiting the New Boston) return to *Cæsure* publication after an issue's vacation. After graduation in June, Carl hopes to travel the Northern Route to seek an MFA in creative writing at Alaska.

HENRY SIROTIN (Some Thoughts on a Five Hundreth Home Run), while apparently saddened by the exodus of baseball from his native New York in recent years, has managed to combine a glossary-like memory of sports events with an absorbing interest in Mongol invasions and other unrelated interests. A graduate student in the history department, Henry received his BA from CCNY, where he edited a never-published humor magazine in the process of convincing himself that he was in reality a military historian rather than an engineer.

LOIS BOYLES, TOM CROWE, J. A. GRON, GREGORY FITZGERALD, and JUDY VANNETT seem to have managed to avoid having themselves discovered by *Cæsure* in any more than a manuscript each. If any of them care to be noted, all they need do is publish in future issues.

Deadline for the Spring 1966 issue is *February 11*. Material may be left in the *Cæsura* office (Franklin Room, S.U.) beginning January 3.

Manuscripts should be typed (poems one to a page, please), with the author's name and address on a separate sheet attached to the work. Work to be returned to the author must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.

Authors of work to be pulished in the Spring issue will be notified by mail. There will be a notice in the *Collegian* as to when unpublished manuscripts may be picked up at the office.







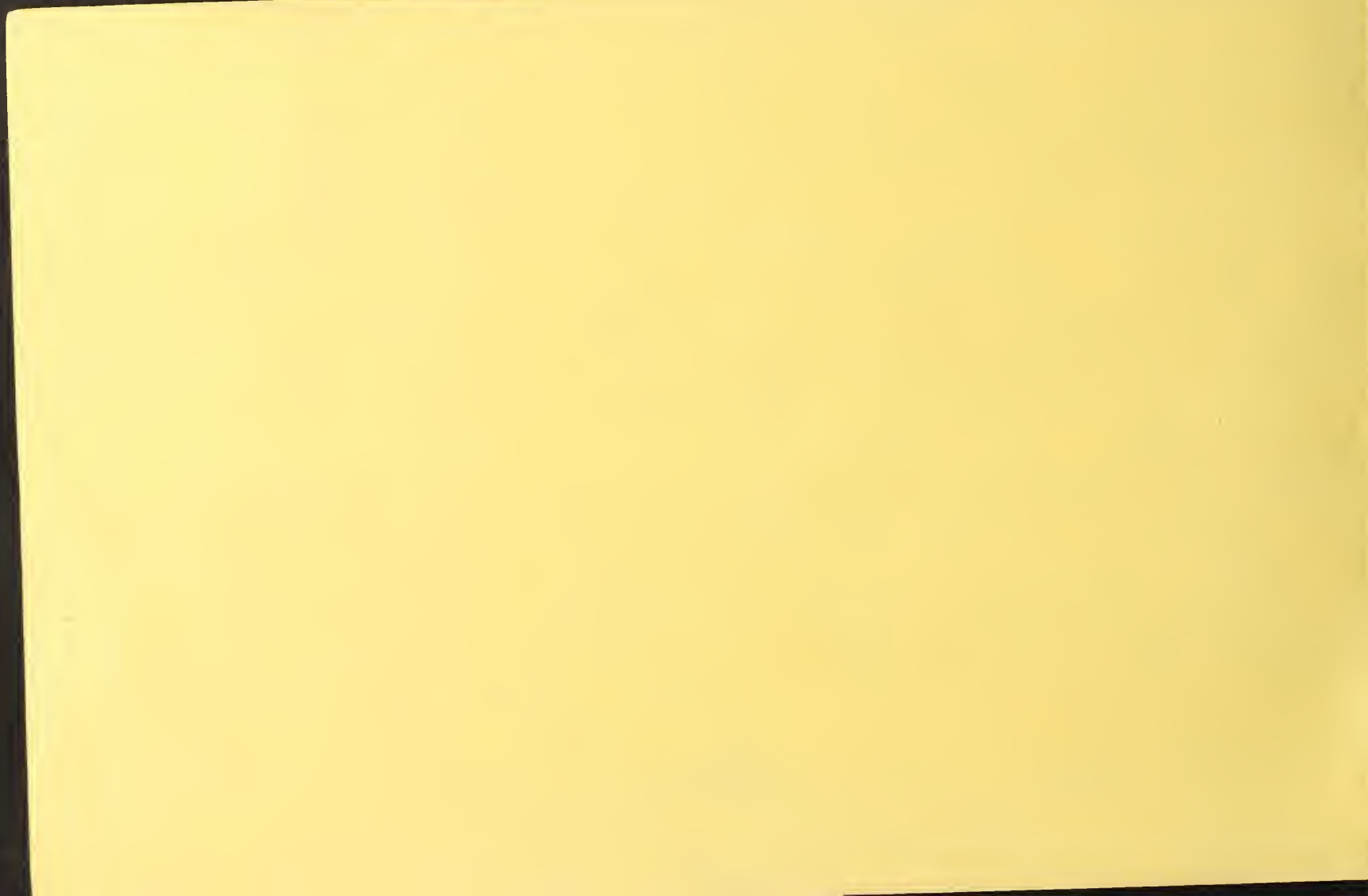


CAESURA FALL '65 VOL. XXIX NO. 1

CAESURA  
Student Union Bldg.  
University of Mass.  
Amherst, Mass. 01003

*CAESURA Volume XXIX No. 2*

11-80





# CÆSURA

The Literary Magazine  
Of The University Of Massachusetts

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CÆSURA is published three times a year by undergraduates of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Massachusetts and is edited by undergraduate and graduate students. Address: Box 104, Recognized Student Organizations, Student Union, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts.



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## SYNESTHESIA AND THE KINGDOM OF A SINGLE SOUND

JACK ELIOT MYERS

The essence of poetry is the rhythm of a single sound. I am not speaking of metrics, of structure, of feet, nor any part of the formative manifestations of poetry which is so well adaptable to verse. I am speaking of that pure poetical tangent where or when the vibration of the inner vision is translated into sound(s); and where the inner sound is translated into a physical reality of the imagination — A synesthesia for all the senses derived from the accuracy of sound.

Pound has categorically tri-sected poetry and labeled this delicate area as MELOPOETICS. He recognized its existence; dogmatized it; but didn't attempt to explain it. Hopkins butchered this purity by dreaming rhyme schemes of sound and building a baroque funhouse of metrics. He knew all the secret ways, but his soul was a song on crazy-legs. Thomas, a magician who wove organs of chords into rich tapestries, demonstrated the trick, but never let the step-by-step instructions out of his back pocket. Mr. Eliot learned from Pound, and was content with sound of his own. But Hart Crane leapt up screaming from the dentist's drill: "Illogical impingements on the consciousness!" So, here is the point to begin.

1. The naked ear cannot discern the various patterns of rarefactions which sound waves produce. If it could, it would "see" sound much as an oscilloscope does. But the trained, refined ear can INTUIT these patterns, which, implicitly, is ultimately more valuable to poetry. Simply demonstrated, this difference in rhythmical sound values is seen when one discovers the wide disparity and various intensities found between the words (in this exact order)\*—

### LINE-SIGN-STEIN-SPINET

2. Here are 4 combinations of effects created by sounds placed in 4 newly ordered juxtapositions:

#### *PRONOUNCE THESE WORDS ALOUD*

- a. SIGN-STEIN (Isn't STEIN more piercing without the buffer of SPINE?)
- b. LINE-SPINE (The value difference here makes the relationship between the 2 words uncertain. There's an amazing difference.)
- c. SPINE-SPINET (Here's an end bunching effect, as in an accordion; but the 2 words relate well.)
- d. STEIN-LINE (A very smooth transition in values; much like the sound STREAMLINE.)

I have used rhymed sounds because, though the rhyme tends to unify and equalize the words, we shall have a better basis for agreement upon which to see their value differences. This point leads to an irony in the metaphysics of sound: The closer two different sound values approach each other, the more clearly defined are their differences. It's a common observation in any field.

\* The difficulty in demonstrating this relationship is geometrically progressive if polysyllabic words are used.

3. Now if we compound the value of a sound by our understanding that the rhyme contained within the sound has a potency for *visual reality*, the combinations of effects which can be made are probably limitless. For example, listen to Wallace Stevens:

She sang beyond the genius of the sea.

The sparkling effect obliterates the logical meaning — which IS his meaning of the first order. Here the key words are SANG, GENIUS, and SEA. The word BEYOND gives scope to the overriding sound values of the three primary words. The rest of the words are obvious metrical props, and are used for their syntactical value.

Another example is Crane:

And the rain continues on the roof/  
with such a sound of/ gently pitying laughter.

This is an equation. First there is the description of a condition/ then the equal sign/ then the rendering of the sound of that condition. OR:

*description of condition*

And the rain continues on the roof

*equal sign*

with such a sound of

*the sound of the condition*

gently pitying laughter

GENTLY PITYING is the sound of a silent motion picture of rain; LAUGHTER is the silent roar of rain. This, in fact, is one of Crane's characteristics — A silent sound.

4. By adding sight derived from sound, we get textures — or an almost-sense of touch, a touch of the imagination's. For example, Thomas:

Or rippling soft in the spinney moon as the silk

Now the poetry begins to materialize as the imagination's physical reality, touch which is derived from the "sight" of a sound.

5. Finally, here is the sound of motion. Thomas:

And their firefly hairpins flew  
and the ricks ran around

The first five words are a whirling pinwheel; the last five words are a mad little scurry in separate circles. The sound F and the R incept the movements by evoking a quality of motion. The sound I gives to the first line airiness and directionlessness. HAIRPINS is a visual crutch made potent by its currounding sounds. FLEW acts as a sound force which springs the first line from inertia. RICKS is a sound definition of the diminutive state of tiny beings. The word RAN is a ground down straight-line act in sound in the context of the second line; but it has no power of its own when isolated as a single word. ROUND, on the other hand, has a definite strength of its own, and is enhanced in its context to burgeon with fullness, act as a sound stop, and carry an ironic meaning of endlessness.

At last we arrive at viewing the general metrical structure of an entire poem. This architecture should evolve organically from the rhythms contained within the sound values of the poem, be they linked in cohesive relationships or examined as isolated entities. This does not restrict the pattern of the poem in any sense, except that the pattern has, in the making of the poem, been intuitively predetermined. And it is this developmental unity which gives critics their standards of excellence, or ought to. Thus, in a derivative sense, the complex nuances which arise from the relationship between just 2 sounds, is directly proportionate to the proper virtuosity of the poem's overall structure. Here, of course, propriety is determined by the individual poet's craftsmanship.

The poet working with sound alone, has the complicated task of creating a visual reality, a spontaneous sense of touch, of motion, etc. That is, he creates an experience which is always fixed in ink.

He masters sound definitions by listening intensely to himself. And the resultant sound, which, if it is true, will contain the rhythmical equivalents of the other senses. The sensitive reader reads these sounds and intuits them into an experience. So then, the poet is a painter, a sculptor, a musician, and an architect. His obvious advantage over the other arts is that he is working in the medium of language.

The essence of poetry is the rhythm of a single sound.

### HEMLOCK FOR A LEMMING

Your shadow knifes between us, slicing the bed in half.  
You leave no peace, no sleep, just a hard, defiant core:  
Tears too deep for weeping, dead lust, a lacerated laugh,  
No other's wife after, better never wed, yet your whore.  
You crushed and pounded one small life to light,  
Gave her breath enough to love, life enough for pain,  
Sight enough to possess her death in ours. Mighty  
your weapons of memory and desire. A life in vain,  
our child whose milk you shared; your body's print  
lying under love, an identity torn asunder, ever rent  
in music's fire searing, marred nightmare hooded hint,  
Twisting tight regret and terror where forever went.  
Lost a brutal thunder tossed refrain, a passion,  
I must follow now to death, faithful, (in my fashion).

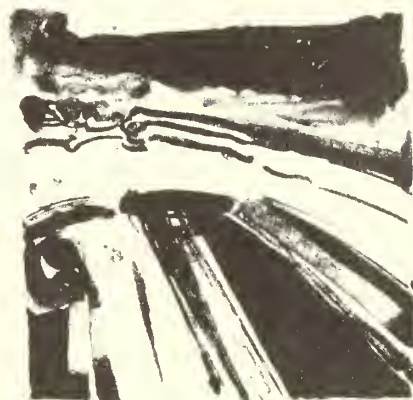
VIRGINIA PERRY

## SALT SPRING

Death should not walk so carefully in April;  
Rasping the new earth with black-cruled scars;  
Wounding early lilacs with dark-umber sores.  
He waited while the pooling snow  
Had trickled from the sun-hot stones  
To walk upon new tissue torn raw for infection.  
I cannot hear the pagan spring protection,  
Whistling intricately from the green-cut pipes  
Of pans I could once believe; only moans  
And shrillings from the leaves death has kissed  
Can penetrate the blooded fog of this Spring.  
My ancient easy friends will not show  
Among the swinging trees, only bones  
Evidence the matter of existing nymphs or dryads.  
Trees that should have birds have bars:  
Waiting for the prisoners of this war;  
Death should not walk so carefully in April.

ASHLEY WALKER





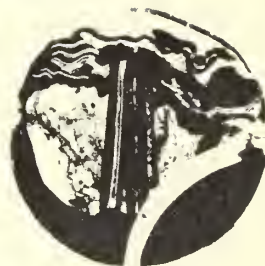


## BOUNDARIES

### Zero, zero

Love was not here, my fragil one, I do not think  
That we were meant to keep a night  
Nor do I wonder that we never touched.  
Lost times and things and places are not sad  
And nothing is as nothing ever was.  
Do not think of ifs and promises and broken words;  
And do not suppose goodby.

ASHLEY WALKER



## THE BALTIMORE STORY

JOAN C. HAND

### WIDOWS

*Widows  
left with only tinted  
portraits of the past  
and tinted  
hair combed thin  
as life to frame  
their worn complexions  
keep  
their homes by  
taking strangers into  
memories-of-children-  
haunted rooms.*

*Left to feign  
the youth that withered  
long ago, they  
wheeze  
a friend hello  
while walking to the store  
or talk on porches  
to impatient tenants  
just to hear a human voice.*

*Lonely women  
cobwebs in their wombs  
live by taking strangers  
into their rooms.*

david axelrod

Hannah Cassens lived in one of those Baltimore houses built at a time when neighborhoods were cultivated like roses, and roses wrapped themselves along her porch rail. They were red. She cut them before supper and sometimes her skin was calloused because the pincers were heavy; but dauntless Hannah snipped and trimmed like a hairdresser so the blossoms were shapely and round, open and welcoming; Theodore flung up his hands in approval and they drank blackberry after-dinner cordial while the children dreamed in their clean bedrooms, the molding on the walls painted white and the curtains catching the breeze, the moon shining through the gauze until moonlight turned into sunlight, and they'd awaken with the sun blowing

through the window, and the air silent. Their mother nursed them in a stuffed chair with feather pillows for her back and nothing but contentment on her churchly face.

Theodore died before Virginia was ten. Alex had just turned twelve. It was March. It was no surprise. He had been sick for two years. The children didn't budge out of the house for a week. The draperies were drawn. Most of the day she lay in bed. In the evening she rose to greet the sympathetic neighbors. They came in little clumps, each carrying some token of unhappiness. The house stank with flowers. It was a gorgeous funeral. Not a single relative failed to arrive. But when they left she was left alone. Often in the late afternoon when the children were in school she'd sneak through the immaculate house, click the key in the liquor cabinet and drink standing by the kitchen window, looking out at the uncut grass and the leaves turning green.

The university gave her a job as a librarian — part time, out of the house, just enough to keep her mind off it. Then the children grew up. Virginia married and moved to Philadelphia. Alex volunteered for the Air Force and was stationed in Japan. She wasn't happy about that but she told him he could go. Then one day she received a telegram. It was winter; she was wearing a floor-length dressing gown. It trailed across the Persian rug. The messenger was a thin, scrawny fellow who stood hopping first on one leg, then the other. He'd hoped the news was good so she'd give him a tip. But she never looked up from the paper, just slammed the inner door, then the hall door, so the lace curtains shimmered against the glass and all the boy could see was his own startled expression.

Inside she read it over and over. Dear Mom, Misaka and I were married December twenty-fifth, Christmas morning . . . The words danced across the lines, in the spaces, off the page. She crumbled it into a ball and opened the grate on the fireplace. Then she rubbed her hands along her hips as if to clean them. She went right to the cabinet and poured a drink. She gulped it in one hard swallow. Then she poured another, replacing the cap carefully, and shutting the glass door, she carried this one all the way upstairs to her son's room. In the evening light the room was ringed in shadows. She rested the drink on the dresser and sat on the bed. Then she picked it up again and placed it to her lips. It was good. It made her quiet inside. She needed quiet now. She looked at the picture of her son on the dresser, the son that was no more.

With the library in the morning and evenings at the church Hannah's day was filled. But at night she was alone in the big house on Calvert. And her hands, unbusied, found a way to her lap, lying there like pieces of clay while her bottom warmed the brocade couch and her eyelids shaded her piercing eyes like draperies keeping out the sun. Then she fell asleep, her body sloping into the folds of the chair like a piece of mended cloth.

She woke in the middle of the night, the living room pitch black, no desire to sleep in her empty bed, just sit until her eyes were strong enough to distinguish objects, then go to the window, carefully drawing the curtains apart. The street was empty. Here and there a light in an upstairs window shone. Some student, working late. Those singular lights haphazardly spotted through the black neighborhood like well-lit tombs: tombs provided with table lamps and

drop-leaf desks and quiet iron beds to crawl into, tousled, at five o'clock in the morning. She let the curtain fall and turned in a familiar direction. Settled in bed she drank a glass of brandy, flipping the pages of 'Better Homes and Gardens.' After awhile she clicked off the lamp and turned over on her stomach. Her fingers reached up to the pillow as if to tear it down to her side. She slept fitfully and when she awoke her nightgown was twisted around her legs and the pillow crunched on the floor. Light seeped through the spaces in the green shade. It was too late to go to work. She just lay staring up at the ceiling and when she got out of bed she shuffled through the empty house as if the rooms were unfamiliar, as if it wasn't her property, as if she didn't belong there. She wandered into Alexander's room. It was dusty; not the kind of dust that a wet rag flicks around but the kind that a hundred horsepower vacuum cleaner couldn't eat into. It was dust growing from the cracks in the wood, in between the lines on the floorboards, circling through the backs of the closets and settling on the steps. Essie, the colored girl, couldn't get it clean and once in a while Hannah herself would tie a scarf over her hair and wash down the woodwork. But no one had been there for some time so the dust had stubbornly settled. She touched the doily on the dresser. Roses were the design. That white lace was black at the center. Hannah lifted it off the dresser and folded it in tiny squares.

In the mirror she could see the whole room reflected. It was small and the iron bed occupied most of the space. She could see her face. Her hands automatically smoothed the hair back. She worked her fingers along the sides of her eyes, pressing her temples, breathing quickly and deeply, each breath a little sigh. Then she went to the dresser and

combed the hair forward around her face. It was Alex's old comb; some teeth were missing. She replaced it suddenly and went to the window. It was December and very grey. The sky looked like it wanted to snow. The clouds looked like biscuit dough, flat and squashy, an ashy color with no intention of growing pale. She looked out through the alley at the backs of houses, their moldy porches, paint-peeled and cluttered. Then it started to rain, like somebody'd dumped buckets of water over the horizon, and the water ran like tears washing the little color away, the last trace of green in the grass, turning cindery leaves to mud. The rain beat against the metal garbage cans and pattered on the pavement and in the soft loam of the vegetable garden. Hannah opened the window for just a moment and stuck her head outside as if in the gesture of a wave. She withdrew it immediately but not before the boy racing down the alley had seen it. He was carrying books inside his jacket, clutching them to his chest to keep them dry. And something settled, stirred in her. And it came to her: the thought that some nicely-bred university boy could love this room, could read in the chintz-covered chair. Someone could comb his hair in the mahogany framed mirror and someone could stuff his socks into his shoes at night and curl up beneath the colored comforter. Someone, not like Alexander but still some good boy making her home a home. She could give him bananas and apples on winter mornings and possibly tea in the afternoon, when the twilight needed cheering. She'd serve it in the dining room on the embroidered tablecloth with the silver creamer and the wedding sterling. How nice, she thought, stroking her hair. First thing this afternoon, she'd put her name on the list for university housing. Hannah Cassens, Calvert Street,



location convenient, small room, a boy preferred, a *nice* boy. No, she'd better leave out the "nice." They might not like it and of course it was implied. No university would send anyone but a nice boy to her house; to her home. She smiled. The rain continued to beat gently. Hannah Cassens rose, passing the mirror as she went out. Her cheeks were pink.

One afternoon towards the beginning of February, the bell chimed. Hannah hurried through the foyer to the kitchen and emptied the half-filled glass. Then she walked primly to the door, patting the stray hairs in place. The girl at the door stepped backward as she flung the door wide.

"University housing gave me your address. My name is Helena Moore. I want to rent a room." She said it quickly, jumbling the words.

Hannah frowned, appreciating the girl's confusion. "Come in!"

She gulped, shifting her bag to the other hand, and followed Hannah through the foyer, up the carpeted steps. Hannah walked briskly, neither turning her head sideways nor back, indicating the surroundings with the point of her finger, unflinching; it touched every object it needed to describe.

"This is the room. It gets drafty in cold weather. It's small but I'd expect you to keep it tidy. The colored girl cleans once a week. Of course, no visitors after ten and gentlemen are not permitted past the parlor."

"How much is it?" she asked timidly.

Hannah hesitated. "Fifteen dollars a week."

The girl toyed with a button.

"Linen service is included."

"I hadn't expected to spend that much."

"Well, I can understand, you might not be comfortable here. It is a boy's room."

The girl looked up as if to question the propriety of speaking in any but a hushed tone. "It's a nice room, but . . ."

"Perhaps you'd like to think about it." Hannah flicked the light. The girl followed her downstairs. She was a slight thing. Her blond hair hung loosely. Her eyes were blue.

"Well, thank you very much," she reached for the heavy door. She was out before Hannah had finished composing a smile.

The boy arrived two days later. He was simply dressed and called her ma'am. He rented the room for ten dollars a week, linens included. It was settled in fifteen minutes. The boy went out and returned with a suitcase. He told her a carton of books would arrive later.

That evening Hannah left the kitchen light on. She had told him something was always in the icebox for a snack. The boy thanked her in his well mannered way. He was standing in the middle of the staircase, his corduroy coat open and his brown hair brushed back. His eyes were clear, his mouth serious.

"Now don't be bashful if you're hungry, Peter."

"No Ma'am, and thank you very much."

She laughed, embarrassed. "I mean, I won't have anyone going hungry in my house."

The last words she called up, leaning on the banister, her face focused on the landing. She heard the door close. Then she walked down the foyer to her own room. She searched through her drawer and found a crumpled pack-



age of cigarettes. She smoked furiously, gathering all the smoke into her mouth, then blowing it out before it settled in her lungs. After a few puffs she put it out. There was a stale smell, but she didn't open the window. Above, she heard the reassuring tap of the boy's feet. It was like rain on a spring night: you are certain it will keep falling till morning, and the intention of spring rain is good. The grass will be healthier and the flowers spring from their beds like a fresh cake jumps towards a knife. She relaxed the muscles of her face and lay quietly listening to the boy. Upstairs the door closed. She sat up as if startled from a good dream. Waking was a nightmare. "Why, he's going out!" She looked at the dresser clock. "It's past twelve. Where's a young boy going past twelve?" She stood at the door, her ear pressed to the crack. The front door banged. In a moment she was in the living room, peering through the curtains. She saw the boy cross Calvert. He was walking at a clipped pace, heading downtown.



\* \* \*

"Sounds real close mouthed."

"Not impolite," Hannah insisted.

Mrs. Reed sighed. "Be glad he isn't surly. Mrs. O'Hare isn't having any picnic."

"Serves her right for taking in that kind."

"She didn't know at that time," Mrs. Reed reached for the jam.

"Peter isn't exactly *that* kind."

"That is yet to be seen."

"What do you mean?" asked Hannah.

"You said yourself he goes out at night."

"All boys go out."

"And wait till they start bringing in what they go out for."

"Evangeline Reed, I never thought I'd hear that kind of talk from you."

"I'm just being realistic. Didn't May Hall discover two bottles of gin stashed in a closet? And that nice widow Jackson, you know what her boarder did?" Mrs. Reed leaned forward, cupping her hands.

"I'm not interested."

"Mark my words, Hannah Cassens, you'll get interested when it starts happening to you."

"Evangeline, I don't see the point in spreading malicious gossip."

"It isn't gossip if it's true."

"Well I won't see Peter slandered. He's a good boy, polite and cooperative. Why, just the other day he put in a washer in the kitchen faucet and when I offered him money, he wouldn't take it."

Mrs. Reed pursed her lips. Don't get me wrong, now, I'm not spreading any false tales."

"I know you're being cautious, but trust me, Evangeline, in this instance I'm right."

"As long as you're sure, Hannah, as long as you're sure."

Mrs. Reed rose. Hannah started at the grandfather clock. "Gracious, if it isn't ten to five."

Evangeline smiled. "It has been a lovely afternoon."

Hannah patted her lips with the napkin. Daintily she laid it beside the empty cup.

The two ladies walked through the dark parlor, their footsteps echoing that ominous feeling dusk brings when the shades are drawn and the last justification for light is pitifully banned.

Mrs. Reed helped her into a grey coat. "Do come again," she said.

As the door shut, Hannah squinted. She edged down the stone steps and at the bottom turned and waved. At the window Mrs. Reed's hand moved. A white handkerchief fluttered.

Mrs. Hannah Cassens, clutching a woven bag, cautiously advanced down North Charles. A wind nearly lifted her hat to the Chesapeake Bay. She held it in place. As she neared the park her pace quickened. It was dusk and a sliver of moon shone through the trees like a lemon lozenger. The leaves were forming and the buds glanced circumspectly over the street. Suddenly three boys, grinning and bouncing a ball, ran out of the park, one not more than seven, dragging a rope. Hannah shivered.

At the A&P she bought a loaf of bread and a tin of baking soda. As she was leaving, she noticed her boy with a pretty blond girl. He was carrying packages and the girl clung to his arm. He was laughing and she too giggled, as if their private joke could infect the world with glee.

"Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater, had a wife and couldn't keep her . . ."

"You tease."

"No, you."

"One kiss."

"After the paper."

"That'll be forever," he whined.

"Oh, Okay," she lifted her face to his and dabbed a kiss. Then she scampered away waving her gloved hand. The boy waited till she had disappeared, then he reluctantly gathered his bundles and turned down thirtieth.

At an inconspicuous distance, Hannah followed. Of course the girl could be in the same class. Virginia's friends used to work on committee reports. Young people after school, milk, cookies, more palavering than work, but still even if it was an excuse for fun they had to report facts. Nothing wrong with serious university people making friends, working together, studying.

She reached Calvert long after Peter. Now it was dark and the neighborhood, sparsely lit like a church, glowed with quiet religion.

The next afternoon she baked sugar cookies. Alex's favorite. She sponged down the table and greased the cookie sheet with Crisco. She chilled the dough in the refrigerator. Then she searched through the drawers and at last found the cookie cutters buried in between stubs of pencils, string, and a rusty Boy Scout knife. They were dusty and a little bent out of shape. But she cleaned them up good and soon had flowers and tiny hearts and stars all laid out nice in the oven.

When the boy came in, the aroma arrested his nostrils. He stood motionless in the dark foyer as if moving would disturb the smell. Hannah had heard the latch click, and

in the kitchen, patted her hair, undid the flowered apron and drew her lips into a fine determined line. Then she walked briskly into the foyer. On a linen napkin she held three fresh cookies.

"You're just in time," she laughed gaily, extending the prize.

The boy reached cautiously into the snowy napkin as if his hands might suddenly soil it.



"Now I know you can eat more than one," she admonished with mock seriousness.

He started at the remaining two cookies. The first filled his mouth and the sound of teeth crunching reddened his face with embarrassment. "They're very good, delicious," he mumbled again.

"There's two jars full in the kitchen. Now don't be shy; help yourself."

"Yes, I will; uh, thank you, Ma'am."

"Would you like to save these two for later?"

He gulped, taking the offered cookies, and continued upstairs. At the landing she called up, "Peter, are you hungry? Would you like some dinner?"

"That's very nice of you, Mrs. Cassens, but I wouldn't want to trouble you."

"No trouble at all," she called back. "There's a leg of lamb in the oven, more than enough for two."

\* \* \*

She was arranging the candles around the meat platter when she remembered it. Blackberry cordial, perfect, in good stemware, just the touch! She rinsed the long stemmed glasses carefully. Then she poured a shot. She gulped it with a flourish, throwing her head back so the overhead light invaded her eyes, and she moved into the dining room as if propelled by the dazzling spots before her.

The boy hung back in the foyer, watching her set out the drinks. She was humming. When he coughed she turned abruptly, then smiled graciously, waving her arm over the laden table.

"Sit right down, everything is ready."

When he was settled in place she suggested a toast. "Anything your heart desires," she said, her eyes twinkling. He stared at the mantel. "To your good home cooking."

"Now, don't flatter me, you haven't tasted it yet," she laughed. He returned a smile and their glasses clinked. He gulped it quickly while she, remembering to take delicate sips, let her eyes, dreamy and sad, rest on the boy's face.

There was plenty of lamb. The boy ate three helpings, though he didn't care for the Harvard beets; still, he finished two boiled potatoes and for dessert, a huge piece of apple cobbler.

"I suppose your medical studies keep you well occupied. Do you still find time to make friends?"

"Yes . . . No . . . I mean, I'm not in medicine."

"Oh, I thought you were a medical student."

"I'm studying writing," he said.

Her mouth formed an oval and her lips puckered as if she was drinking from a straw. "Do you get some kind of certificate for that?"

"Oh, I'll receive a regular degree in literature; I'm working on a novel."

She smiled politely, "But don't all writers have beards?"

"Not all."

She forced a laugh, "You certainly don't look like a typical writer."

"I do have other course work."

"Well, I hope it's more sensible. I mean, you have to look ahead." She folded the napkin in her lap as she spoke and then rose abruptly. "Peter, I hope you're not afraid to bring friends to the house. I'm not averse to noise if it's before eleven, and if there's a young lady, I'd certainly like to be introduced. This is your home also."

"Oh, oh thank you, and also for the delicious dinner."

"That's quite alright, my pleasure." She smiled as he hurriedly left the table and ascended the stairs. He was back in less than a minute with a jacket slung over his shoulder and a folder tucked beneath his arm.

"Good night, Mrs. Cassens, and thanks again."



It was on the tip of her tongue to say, "Where are you going?" but the door slammed and Hannah drew up her hanging jaw and turned into the dining room. The table was cluttered, the serving dish greasy, scraps of lamb, most of the beets left, mint jelly, and the creamer half full. She watched the table, wanting suddenly not to disturb it. The boy was gone. Easily understandable. Can't expect conversation the whole night. He was probably at the library; they pile work on those university boys. Yet she had spent all day preparing, not that he knew. It was a surprise, a last minute invitation; he couldn't have known. But those final details, the sweet cream for the apple cobbler, running to the A&P. He could have guessed a meal like that doesn't spring from nowhere.

In her flowered apron she cleared the table, folding the linen cloth away and wrapping the candles carefully in cellophane. She soaked the dishes in the sink, letting the suds rinse over her palms, red and moist, the fingers drying in creases. She smoothed on some lotion from the cabinet overhead. Then, clicking the light, left the kitchen. In the dark parlor she sat, her legs resting on the hassock, her fingers pressing into the temples as if to induce relaxation, but her senses wouldn't obey, and she saw not as it was, but as it had been, Theodore's arm chair, a space curved into the pillow, Virginia's baby shoes, bronzed, on the mantel and Alexander's soldiers trailing through the foyer, up the stairs and into the room now sheltering the boy.



Blinking suddenly, she sprang up. No sense in sitting in a dark room, plenty of sewing to be done. Bazaar next Saturday. Hannah strode into the bedroom, her footsteps echoing. As she opened the closet door, her eyes caught sight of the bottle leaning against the sewing box. She gathered it up in her arms, resting it gently on the dresser, hesitating long enough to fet a glass.

After the fifth drink her face assumed an expression familiar to her youth when dressing for an evening out. She squinted her eyes and the mirror turned her face into tiny sparkles like the sun on a lake, fooling her into believing she was seeing jewels.

Her eyes darted through the reflection like sparrows, catching every detail yet seeing nothing, the tilted nose, the high cheekbones, the thin lips, the hair, beauty parlor curled, short and serviceable. And that face, vacant of promise, vacant of hope, vacant of happiness, stared at itself until the image became vacant of its own reflection. Losing the dignity of self recognition, Hannah stumbled to her bed, desiring the obliteration of sensation with a passion foreign to her ascetic heart.

She dreamed she was sitting on a porch swing. It was spring, the moon full, the air cool. She wore a cranberry colored dress, high necked with a tight bodice. Her hair fell soft to the shoulders. She was rocking back and forth and the young man beside her was whispering into her ear. She couldn't understand what he was saying, only the impression of his words caused her to laugh and finally she looked at him real hard and his lips formed the words, I love you; only they weren't said. She kept asking him to

repeat them aloud but all he could do was mouth them. He was a tall young man wearing an Air Force uniform. She thought his face resembled Theodore's but as he repeated the phrase she was certain it was someone else. She kept trying to remember who it might be. Then she realized it must be Alex, dressed in his uniform. As this idea dawned her body began to grow heavier, the hair shortened, and instead of the cranberry dress she was wearing an old shirt-waist with an apron. The man beside her grew smaller and it was Alex, dressed in his sailor's suit, every minute becoming younger. He was a baby, crying, hungry. She opened the dress to give him her breast. The infant nursed. Suddenly the pressure hurt. Teeth cut into her flesh, the child was a grown man again. She stared at his face, still trying desperately to recognize it. But she couldn't and at last struggled to throw him off her lap. He clung to her, touching her breasts, mouthing the words, I love you.

She opened her eyes quickly, the overhead light glaring, the bedspread wrinkled. She sat up, passing her hand over her wet forehead. For a moment she couldn't remember the dream, then it became clear. She pulled herself out of the bed, flinging the window open, letting the air soak through the room. She was about to open the door when she heard a noise: a sound like springs creaking. "What time was it?" She glanced at the clock — four o'clock. She heard voices, indistinguishable. She tried to discern the sounds, where were they coming from? It was a deep voice, then laughter, a woman's laugh, a young woman laughing, breathing so heavily the springs creaked. Hannah stuck her head out the window. She heard a voice cry,

"Peter!" She hung further out, staring up at the side of the house. The voices were coming from above. Helena, I love you, Helena. Now moaning, heavy and hushed. Hannah pulled her head in. She sat at the edge of the bed, clutching her face. From above the springs continued to creak, every moment another cry. She looked at the ceiling. Her eyes pasted themselves to the ceiling. She began to breathe heavily, as if in time to the girl's sounds, moving her shoulders, crinkling her cheeks. She cried, rocking her frame forward and back. The sobs grew louder. Hannah threw her whole body on the bed, sparing the springs no pressure; rolling across the bed, retching sobs like some disagreeable food her body must give up.

## EVERGREEN

Turning upon the atmosphere, too fine for crust,  
This snow will not cocoon the branches,  
Nor transform the cars to monstrous white  
Nor in the light reflect in windows as a sheet.  
It dissolves at any touch  
Melting the pavement to licorice.  
Snow that will be nothing's shroud  
Shows the flaws of separate days in one.

ASHLEY WALKER



## (Untitled)

January's faith has drifted to May's heresy.  
The most of prayer replies to  
April's beaded prophecy in blooming fields:  
"be warmth, these fields pale  
    too dearly  
    toward drifting sleep."

For who shall finger time in these days  
but the Bell Toller's children.  
Rush your warm-waved heart to this patient counter,  
praising me no song that sings eternal.  
I have little patience with misbegot miracles,  
    if a sip now will tide me  
    when the jag of world sleep  
        passes Requiem over our land.

CAROL FISHER

## 65 AT LARGE

Time's undone—  
We're posting letters  
A week from yesterday  
To come, green with mould,  
A month ago.

Hoyle has lost the heavens—  
Comets slay the peace of autumn night  
And by their erie blue Columbus,  
Calmed amid Sargasso Seas,  
Lies to and waits for Lief.  
The moon, spun into a leering disc,  
Wails at my window and returns,  
Chastened, to her orbit.

The fly that buzzes by is also mad—  
Like the trail of a thought  
He is seen by few  
And lives a life as brief as love.

BROCK HALL

## THREE DETERMINATIONS

### I.

There my grandfather ripened in twenty  
peasant years of fear and death,  
dreamt of strength and land,  
took his few belongings  
and crossed over.

### II.

There my father, taught to kill,  
fought for freedom and a Jewish star,  
shook death from the butcher's hand,  
and built a monument to replace  
the twisted cross.

### III.

There my brother draws up his breath  
and courage, whips across the street  
amid a song of bullets, leaps the wall,  
draws in breath and blows out blood  
and dies, crossing over.

DAVID AXELROD

## WHEN DEATH CARVES MY FINAL TONGUE

When death carves my final tongue away,  
It will be the finite violation of my flesh,  
Leaving none to you, my lover, until then I am  
And stand to you in only slight decay.  
My love contains me whole with time enmeshed,  
Between life and you I see but one:  
There is innocence that neither you nor time  
Nor brain nor fever may remove today.  
However clear a night with you or thinking seems,  
So in the waking I might know innocence  
Was never left, still love and thought may blur  
Although this stands: I know no greater  
Gift than virginity you cannot touch  
Or crystal probing spear it through.

ASHLEY WALKER

## CHILD

Darkness-child alone  
    playing on empty streets  
your bouncing ball  
    vanishes into blackness  
and your happy voice  
    echoes from great buildings  
so alone play  
    darkness-child  
cast off by the sun  
    thrown out by the stars  
not even neon signs  
    are your friends  
the empty streets  
    stretching into blackness  
these alone guide your feet  
    and tell you  
that something is there  
    and so  
in the midst of darkness  
    bounce the ball high  
and laugh full  
    in this you are the king  
in this  
    you see the light.

JOHN B. CHILDS







## THE FEAST OF DREAMS

Well, my soul, it has been a long time  
since we last met and melted into song,  
when lords came candled through the night  
for the vision of a lady where she lay,  
and dusty with their days the old brown men  
sought lights, street dancing after dark  
to the blacksmith's wintry shop.

And so the bellows have not blown the flames of dreams  
and the empty anvil has not rung or blazed  
but blackens with the frozen spirit of these days.

But yet there'll be a hammering at the parts, my soul,  
until the ever bright dreams of green greek gold  
trace the exquisite brittle edge of colored glass,  
and the mosaic awakening of birds fly up  
from rocks where waves of song were flung to dry.

It has been a long time since we last met, my soul,  
and melted into song and stormed with chords  
the doors of old brown men asleep in chairs  
and left a gliding fall of flames behind their eyes.

JACK ELIOT MYERS



## MI VECINO

Un sentimiento que moleste —  
De no ver lo que tú viste  
De no sentir lo que sentiste  
En efecto que hay  
Si no encuentro este hojo  
En mi campo aquí  
Al lado de ti.  
No te preocupes  
Si no comprenda que dijiste.

Quisás algún día . . .  
De toda manera  
Hay que saber  
Que nuestras casas tienen  
Al menos dos paredes  
Que son similares.  
No se puede pedir  
Mas que esto, mi vecino.

### *Translation:*

*A disturbing feeling — not to see what you have seen  
nor to feel what you have felt. Indeed what can be done if  
I cannot find this depression in my field here, next to yours.  
Do not trouble yourself if I do not understand what you have  
said. Perhaps some day . . . Yet you must realize that our  
homes have at least two similar walls. We cannot ask for  
more than this, dear neighbor.*

SUE ACKERMAN

## ORAGAMI

The paper birds and animals  
you folded keep me company  
though you have left, and  
in the docile folds of your  
practiced art I see three weeks  
together, compressed; the days  
tucked and turned inside out  
the varicolored moods we shared,  
the paper love that we created.

The menagerie that looks at me  
from a shelf above my desk  
lightens my clown heart,  
plays circus-rings around  
my memory of you.

DAVID AXELROD

## DEATH AT DINNER

As of a mold alike,  
Seven soft golden moths  
Swung through the lighted window  
To sail in circles round the kitchen light.  
Seven moths, come seeking something,  
Flying in the face of death  
Daring his dread teeth  
Blunder in golden sorties  
Past the bulb that burns and burns  
And burns their lighted lives.  
One by one they dropped and died.

On St. Bartholomew's day  
Those come to dine  
Discovered that Fair Reason,  
The light that drew them,  
Was but a blind that hid  
The death that waits us all  
Who circle through the dark.

BROCK HALL

## THE DECEPTION

"You're not the type"  
I've heard them say  
"It's not like you . . ."  
But do they know  
Or have they heard  
Your cries and screams  
To deafened walls and alleys  
Dark and emptied of all thought?  
Have they seen the twisted  
Writhing, yearning of your core  
Or have they felt  
The incessant syncopated beat  
Which once you heard  
And now, has become greater  
Than your being itself?

No — perhaps they shall never learn  
For tomorrow your facade will be gay.  
None will have seen the blackened background  
Almost covered by your cheerful shades of colors  
On the canvas you show to the world.  
None will have seen it,  
None . . . but I.

SUE ACKERMAN



## AUBADE

Once you stood before the sun at dawn,  
Before the cloudy sea of moon and star;  
While the wind spread the fingers of your hair,  
Tipped with flame, you became a silhouette,  
A burning shadow of effluent light.

When you knelt beside me, your eyes of pearl  
And sorrow distilled a madrigal of tears,  
Hot as blood; I drank each sob like wine  
Upon your lips, and whispered in your ear  
That this our world of time could have no shame.

The crimson sun that hung from bleeding skies  
Licked a tongue of flame across your cheek,  
And I, the solar connoisseur of light,  
Beheld the quiet flower of your heart  
That bloomed as deep and boundless as the night.

JAMES CORTESE

## NIGHT THOUGHTS

Far from town  
Under moon on summer sounding roads  
I drive and drive until  
My yellow beams begin to tunnel fog  
That crawls across the way.

I stop and watch the moon consumed  
And feel the clammy cold.

My mind populates the white swirls  
With devils, darkling spirits,  
Satyrs in the mists.  
The solemn spruce gathered close and dark  
Across this little muddled field  
Are of a mind to draw me closer—

They mutter together and beckon  
With drifting fingers of white air  
Toward deeper secrets.

BROCK HALL

## COMPLAINT

I see your eyes are daring me to dare,  
Your Gioconda smile that doesn't care  
For dandelions, stars or summer snow;  
I see the languor of your eyes and know  
That this your valiant transcendental gaze  
Demeans the guilt and ivory of my ways.  
And I recall the voiceless vows we swore  
That promised gracious Bacchanals and more.  
But I am past the haunt of glacial wiles:  
I know these eyes of glass and painted smiles,  
I know the opiate groves of lunar spice  
Where I shall burn in azure fields of ice.

JAMES CORTESE

## VOICES SOFT IN SOLITUDE

Voices soft in solitude  
Answer questions only thought—

Lying on the silken grass  
Of misted meadows  
Is always summer;  
Clouds patterning white on blue,  
Plexus of the mind contented,  
The fantasia of a million stars—  
Stars that glow and glow, and fall;  
The whisper of night,  
Throaty bulls in the reeds;  
The mumble of a billion bees  
Seeking sweetness—

All etch themselves in memory,  
The green world, blotted by the daily din,  
Until, in solitude,  
Soft voices answer questions only thought.

BROCK HALL

## BOUNDARIES

### Six Seconds

The bird came through the winter trees  
Dividing the branches with flattened wings.  
Love, we did not see a tree but two split sides  
Torn against a cold chalk sky.  
We, one, are that, you and I:  
Solid, cut at top so we  
Are rooted below and above alone.

The body could be joined, I think  
To be yet more alone when souls divide.  
You and I are less than this  
More broken than half-seen branches are.

When birds fly through the winter trees  
I see not that but you and me.

ASHLEY WALKER

## FUTILITY

Futility is like a faded whore  
Who slinks hooded in the half-light of night,  
And dimly scatters once again to sight,  
The violet dust of half a life before.  
Or like November leaves whose corpses roll  
With the frantic breath of chill wind gone hoarse,  
As if in restless frown on nature's course,  
It might innerve the stale pause of death's soul.  
In short, 'tis Time that Janus-headed Fool  
Who mocks us when we fall in feverish strife  
And rise again to act our hollow parts.  
With opaque eyes numbed with grey half-life  
We contemplate our start and watch it cool  
As it pumps one last tear and then departs.

ELAINE CHERESKI



# HAPPY REINCARNATION, HANNIBAL SCOTT FORBES

BUGRESS NEEDLE

December in Tucumcari is like the North Pole. The wind screeches across the plains and the cars . . . woosh . . . here comes another one . . . glide by so fast that all the facial expressions are blurred and distorted. Stick out that thumb, Hannibal Scott Forbes, and pray for delivery from this frigid post. What the hell, anyway. The Indians left a long time ago. What am I, a white man, doing on this frozen pumice? See the shells from the last tide that rolled through here. Jesus, have mercy on a wandering bum who asks no favors and whose fingers are crystallized carrots. You can't eat vegetables once they've been frozen. Every housewife knows that. What about hands? My hands! Last time around I was an untouchable and the mud from the Indus caked my eyes. I knew my place then. Why isn't this different? Don't I deserve a break? Happy reincarnation, the holy man said, and I found myself in a slave ship headed west. Black skin and white soul, but the soul never shows even when whips flail the black to red and the red to gangrenous black again. Happy reincarnation, Hannibal Scott Forbes! Get the elephants moving! Scipio is on the march from Rome and our fleet has been sunk in the Adriatic. It's cold on the Alps and my fingers are stiff from the cracked leather reins that refuse to loosen. Happy reincarnation!

"You're a funny boy, Scotty!"

"I think I'm in love with you, Plain Jane. May I go north with you to warm cabins and ironed sheets? I want to make love to you on frozen tundra. Let's fly."

"Oh, Scotty, you're so poetic. Let's go to Cronin's for a rum toddy and rub noses and feel one another under the tables. I love you, Scotty. Love me back."

"I love your back, Plain Jane. Let us fly to New Rochelle and read the *New Yorker*. I'll love your back and your front and do the dishes every morning."

"You'll like the north, Scotty. The wind is harsh, but mama's cabin is warm and comfy. Let's escape. Come on!"

Happy reincarnation, Hannibal Scott Forbes! Moscow is only a few miles away. Lash those horses to the breaking point and we'll have caviar for breakfast.

"Oui, monsieur. Depechez-vous, mes amis."

Once the scourge of Imperia Rome and now the host of the Asian Steppes. Onward . . . onward.

"Achtung! Never mind formations, keep those men moving. The mortars! Where are the mortars?"

"Captured, Sir."

"No more mortars, eh? Well, use slings."

Ou sont les neiges d'antan? The snows that halted the army before and the one before that? How the hell did the Huns manage it? Did they have a logistics problem?

"Come on, men. Once we take Stalingrad, it'll be a breeze. Once we take Stalingrad . . ."

"Oh, Scotty, you're so poetic. I liked Vermont better than Illinois. Why did we have to come here? Chicago is windy and the slums are cold. Watch the headlights flit by on the Loop."

"Plain Jane, my dearest. I'll love you forever."

Happy reincarnation, Scotty. I'll wait forever."

She may still be waiting. The cold becomes warmth after a few hours on '66. The lights from Chicago are passing me now in Tucumcari. I must escape once more.

"Have another drink, Mr. Burns?"

"Nay, mon, I must be off. The snow has been falling for many hours and I fear for my eternal soul. Well, just one more. Must pamper the gut. Good for digestion." (Jesus, it's cold in a snowbank! Never make it back in time. Just to lie here and stare at the constellations. See the Pleiades through a mist of tears. The snow's only falling on earth, but I have distant vision. It's cold. So cold.)

"Plain Jane, let us go to the West Coast. The warm breezes will cure the ache in my bones. You must come too, for the ache in my soul."

"Scotty, you're such a poet! Of course I'll go with you . . . to the edge of the water and over, if I have to."

"Where's your family, Plain Jane?"

"Back in New England, Scotty. You lured me away. I loved you and trusted you and now we are freezing on '66 and the lights of Chicago have followed us to the Panhandle. Buy a starving girl some soup, Scotty."

"Wish I could, honeychile. Just wish I could. I'd ask you to open your coat and show yourself to the florid faces that whisk by. Give them instant desire and maybe slow one down. I love you too much for that. But, would you . . . ?"

"Anything for you, Scotty. Anything. Should I open my dress? Wave a titty at the trucks and maybe get a hitch in a warm cab? No, no, it would be wrong. But . . .

I am so cold. Should I, Scotty? You could close your eyes when a beefy paw warms itself on me. We have to do 'something'!"

"If you would, Plain Jane. If you would."

Too late. Far too late for anything like that. Who can see an exposed body in a blizzard? Not even truckers. Keep moving. I see a light ahead. Come on! Plain Jane, why don't you move? Are you fooling with me? I'll carry the rest of the luggage . . . honest I will . . . only get up from the road. You'll get frostbite of the nose if you lie there like that. Come on! Please, come on . . .

What a funny thing to see Plain Jane's legs protruding from a snowbank in a world she never made. Only her mother knows she's with me . . . and mamas never tell. Where is mama, anyway? Still in Vermont? It must be cold up there. Happy reincarnation, Hannibal Scott Forbes.

December in Tucumcari is like the North Pole. Plain Jane is far behind me and her legs hardly showed by the time a trucker pulled over and said . . .

"Give you a lift, Buddy?"

"I'm Hannibal Scott Forbes."

"Sure, son, hop inside. You must be frozen."

What did he know? Has he ever felt the snows of the Alps or the frozen turf of the Steppes or the howling wind of the Loop or the stinging hailstones of 66 on a freezing December evening? I'm not even mentioning the cold in my soul that settled there ever since I left Plain Jane in a snowbank because she wouldn't get up and her last words were . . . "You're so poetic, Scotty."

Wish me happy reincarnation, everybody. It has to be a happy one. All the others were so sad.

## ET LUX FACTA EST

I know you so well at night  
When the room is bathed in gentle darkness  
Disturbed only by one pool of white light  
Or when darkness surrounds us like  
Velvet  
When you ache and I ache and the  
Darkness makes you talk.

Daylight is different. Then there are no darknesses  
To reveal you. You hide in the bright light  
Which surrounds us. And we are far apart,  
Pushed apart by the furtive light of day,  
Harshly.  
When you ache and I ache but the  
Daylight keeps you silent.

ROBERTA BANNISTER

### A VILLANELLE:

My lettuce haired love with the golden eyes  
Seeds the spring, swift as light, and then  
Time winged quick as a robin flies.

Each spring returns with its seagold lies  
And lives in the golden haired child again,  
My lettuce haired love with the golden eyes.

A golden haired girl with sea green eyes  
From lost long ago, now the child is ten;  
Time winged quick as a robin flies.

Slight, flying skyward, alive and wise  
As spring, growing free as love was then,  
My lettuce haired love with the golden eyes.

Aloof and lovely, diana stripped of lies,  
A slim wreath of time, a ringed amen.  
Time winged quick as a robin flies.

Green gold love fades not nor dies,  
Love once known must turn to life again;  
My lettuce haired love with the golden eyes,  
Time winged quick as a robin flies.

VIRGINIA PERRY





## POEMS FOR PEOPLE

For S.

And finally  
in the worn recesses  
of her body  
a child seed  
and the liquid of life

DAVID AXELROD



## NIGHT LYRIC

It was as if the rising summer moon,  
Revealed in deliquescent fog,  
Had swept the darkness from your face  
To light the inner chambers of your soul.

Your child's eyes and mouth of innocence  
Spoke of deepening silences;  
The somber hair about your neck  
Languished in the Lethe of your smile.

And as the night seeped from widening shadows  
To tangle us within its charms,  
You asked that I forget the world  
Upon your breast, between your open arms.

JAMES CORTESE

## THE FLOWER HUNTERS

Roaring through deep meadows with unstrung bows  
We are the flower hunters  
We do not string our bows for flowerlove can only  
Be captured within the eye  
Touched by the finger tips  
Hooves dulled by contact with the softened earth  
We raise our bows  
Color smashed by the hoof to the eye  
The lids remember green and red before they close

ASHLEY WALKER

## AT SUMMER'S END for May Swenson

The woodsboys' dirty words mock those  
of chimpanzees — jungle-bred incredibles  
but true. Those mountains might  
be seven fallen Titans. Then, I mistook  
that hummingbird for a fish-plug  
badly cast and snagged by the boy who swore—  
stumbled in the crackling brake. Down where  
waterlips nibble clay, muck, polliwogs,  
naked feet, such bucks lock antlers  
and tangle lines with Indian rudeness—  
crayfish back away. There boys do  
their sun-patched, blackest rite—  
summer runs them down—  
and throughout, the thought, school, yawns  
cool as Etruscan catacombs.

Also, walking in woods,  
the waterfall we hear turns  
out to be wind tumbling  
through very tall trees.

Crows fall and fold up  
into bare limbs. That  
stump in the shrubbery does  
look like Lolita with her  
back to us, her hair combed back.  
And the river that hammered  
at dawn, looming fleece or  
counting out sand bars

at day's end is run down:  
a net that peppered cloud confections  
drop into and mottle. The boys  
take on pollen,  
clusters of burrs that stick—  
an old shad or an eel—

then on soft feet, with little thought,  
leave the river, now an  
orphaned father, sprawled in a vault  
as if fallen across seven  
barren mountains. When Goliath fell asleep,  
his mouth fell open.

Andiron of summer  
hammers into boys  
a talent for cavorting  
when school starts  
with no Lolita now  
a stump to leap—  
trousers somehow  
too tight for balance.

Gold flakes in their faces,  
in spite of frost,  
become reflections: leaves that skitter  
and jig confusedly — timidly  
feel for bark-doors at tree trunks.

Boys snap off scraps of bark—  
make up and of each other  
baby apes with a gift for mocking birds  
and taking shapes

the way leaves become fins  
when buffeted by wind

and let their undersides'  
protective coloration

show off in mid air  
a vision of bright minnows.

JAMES NEYLON



## PASSING THOUGHTS

Inside the molten mind  
    of a volcanic friend  
I watched his thoughts  
    flow hot  
to his mouth  
    where they leapt forth  
spreading around him  
    forcing others to flee  
the onslaught  
    and I watched as  
thoughts cooled  
    and those who had fled  
came slowly back  
    walking on now hard lava  
unafraid, uncaring, of the heat  
    once within.

JOHN B. CHILDS

## ETHICS

Librarians sit tight, needed guards,  
On stacks of censored songs of Sappho  
Listening for the sounds of buttons and  
zippers.

While a naked spirit (who is life)  
Copulates with anything in touch  
Laughing at the pins and policies  
Mankind clasps for safety's sake.

RONNIE JONES

## CONTRIBUTORS

John Brown Childs is a UMass grad currently engaged in field work near Oaxaca, Mexico, in connection with his graduate studies in anthropology at McGill University in Montreal.

David Axelrod and Joan Hand are both graduate students at Johns Hopkins University and will receive their M.A.'s in English and Writing this June. Dave is well-known at UMass, both for his poetry, which appeared in the *UMass Literary Magazine* and *Cæsure* from 1961 to 1965, and for his work with *Yahoo*, the campus humor mag. Joan graduated from Bard College ('65) and plans to teach and complete a novel she has begun at Johns Hopkins.

Virginia Perry is a member of the UMass speech department, and has turned the difficult trick of having both literary and artistic material published in the same issue.

James Neyon, of West Springfield, has been a frequent contributor to *Cæsure*. Jim is currently publishing in several magazines, after having sampled several colleges.

Ashley Walker makes her debut with no less than seven poems in this issue. Perhaps her new duties on the *Cæsure* board will prevent a repetition of the feat.





photographers —

*cæsura* hopes to center the art section of its next issue around the work of creative photographers. if you have work you would like to have considered, contact bob pero at 586-1153 before april 15.

printed  
by  
gazette  
printing  
co.,  
79  
pleasant  
street,  
northampton,  
mass.

cover design  
by brock hall

deadline for the commencement issue of *cæsura* is april 15. material may be left in the *cæsura* office, franklin room, s.u.



